"SOLID ACTION, AND PREP-SCHOOL DRAMA YOUR MOTHER NEVER WARNED YOU ABOUT."

–SCIFIPULSE

ANGEL & FAITH™

A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN

VICTOR GISCHLER CLIFF RICHARDS

WILL CONRAD

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JOSS WHEDON

ANGEL & FAITH™

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SEASON 10 · VOLUME 4

A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN

SCRIPT
VICTOR GISCHLER

ART – THOSE WHO CAN'T TEACH, TEACH GYM
CLIFF RICHARDS

ART – A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN
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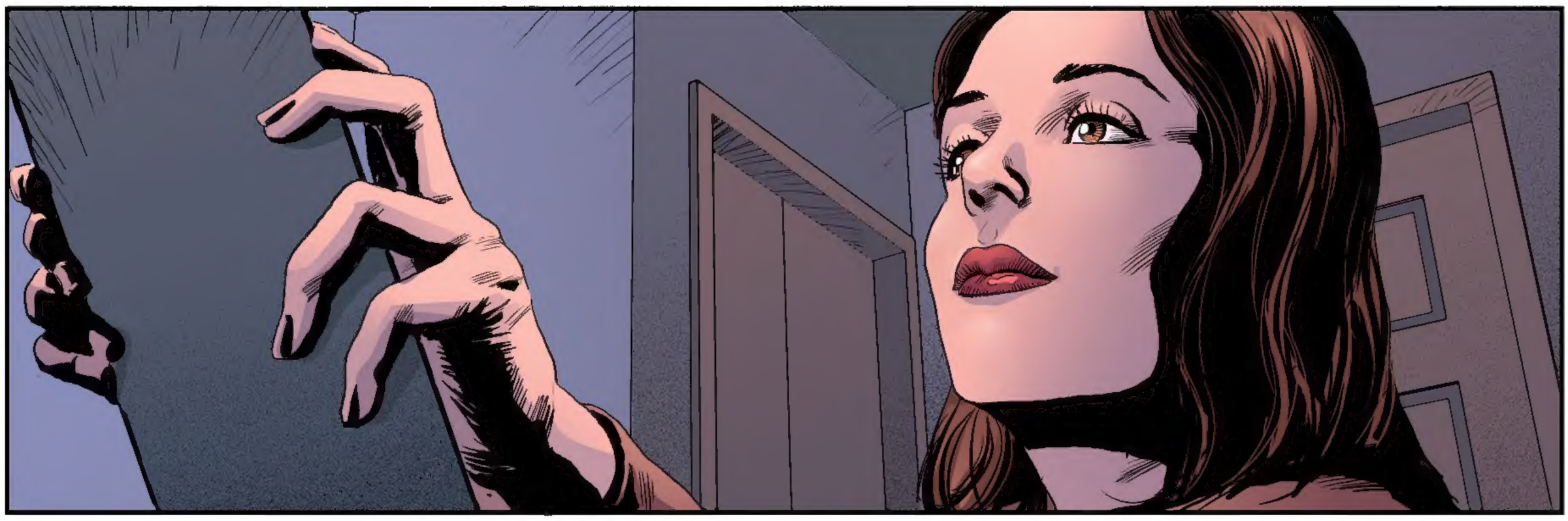

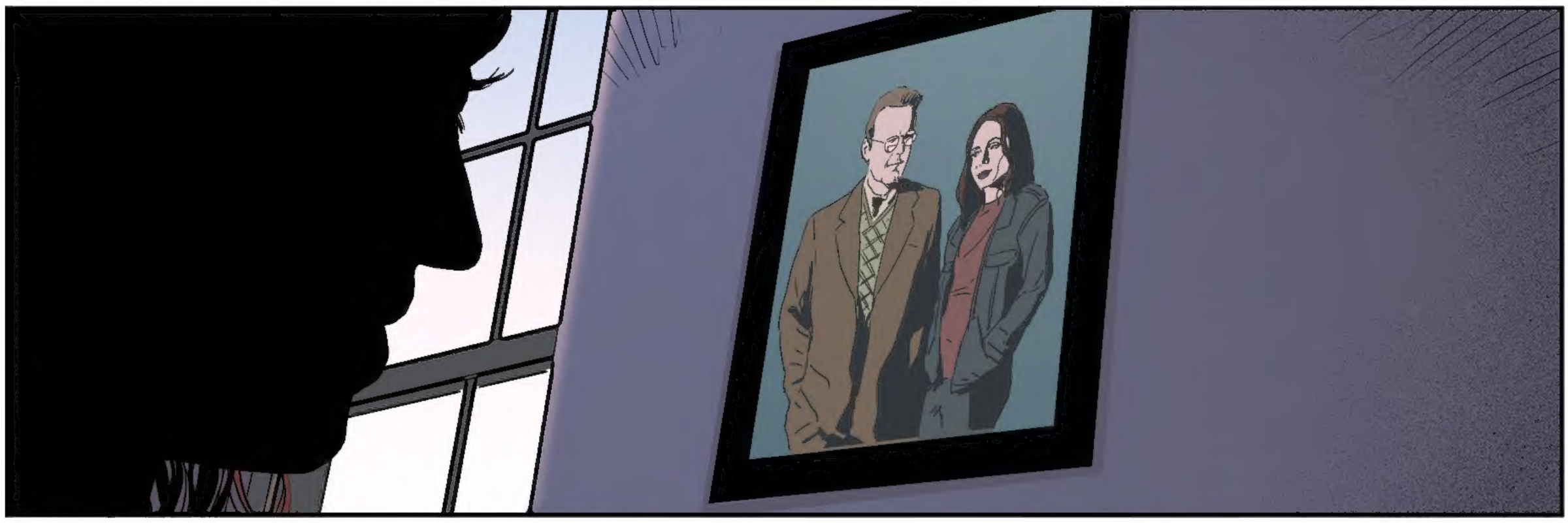

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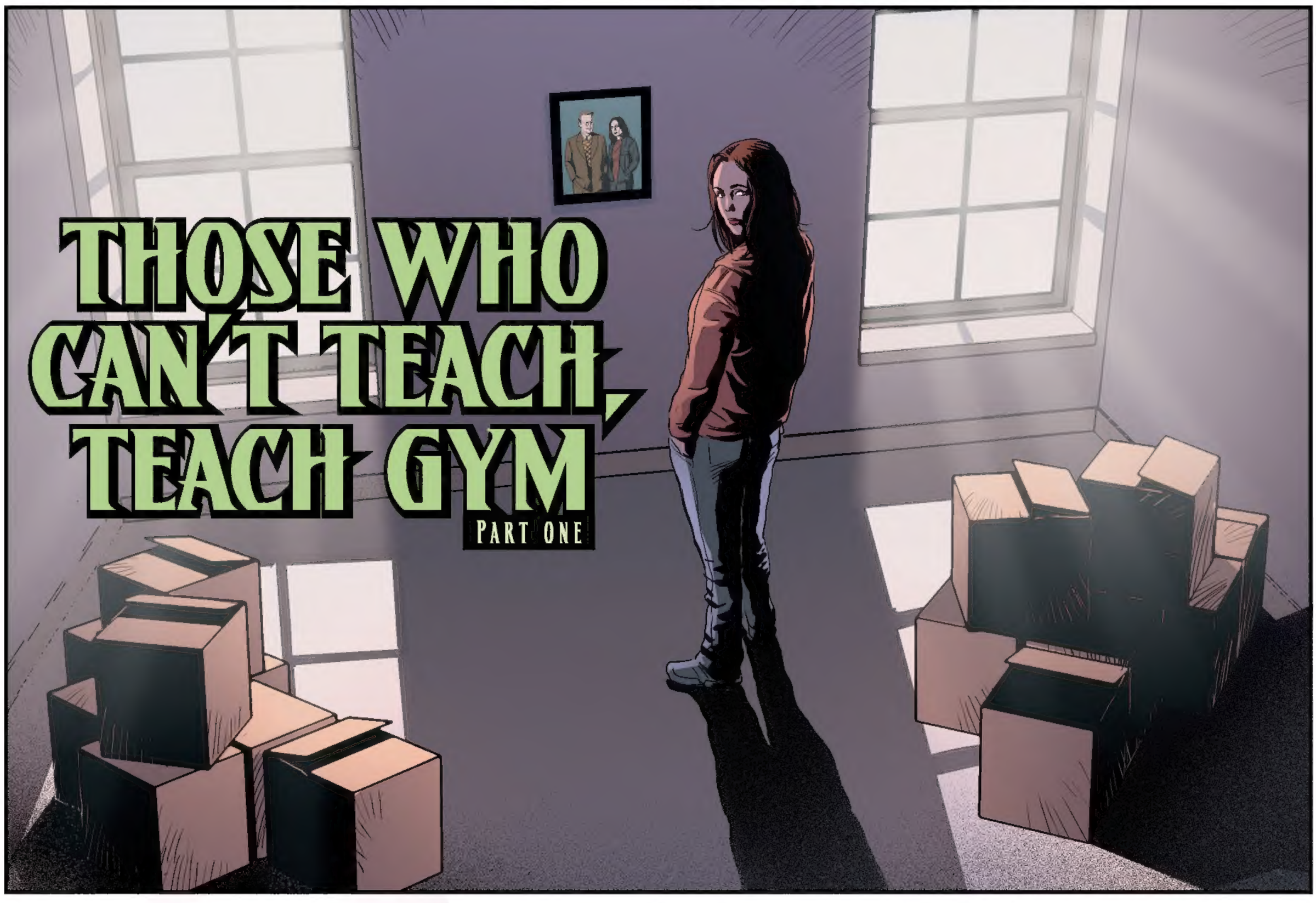

THOSE WHO CAN'T TEACH, TEACH GYM
PART ONE

BOUCHER
CAFÉ
USED
FURNITURE

JUST COFFEE.

RIGHT AWAY, MISS.

A PRETTY LADY SHOULDN'T HAVE TO SIT ALONE ON A NICE DAY LIKE THIS.

BRANDT. ARE YOU HERE TO SAVE ME FROM THE PEACE AND QUIET?

WELL, JUST HAPPENED TO BE CLANKING AROUND YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS. WHY NOT?

YOU DON'T SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF GUY TO *CLANK AROUND* WITHOUT A PLAN. LET ME GUESS...

YOU WERE LOOKING FOR ANGEL AND COULDN'T FIND HIM.

DO I DETECT FROM YOUR COY TONE THAT YOU HAVE THE ANSWERS I SEEK?

DO I *REALLY* WANT TO SPOIL MY WEEK OFF TALKING SHOP?

HAVING A DETECTIVE INSPECTOR OWE YOU A FAVOR ISN'T THE *WORST* THING.

HMMMM.

HOW WOULD *YOU* LIKE TO BE THE FIRST TO SEE MY NEW APARTMENT?

WHEN I SAID I'D OWE YOU A FAVOR, I MEANT A *POLICE* FAVOR.

I DON'T NEED ANYONE ARRESTED. I NEED A PLACE TO *SLEEP.*

OH, MY. YOU WORK FAST, DEARIE. A MAN AND A BED ON THE SAME DAY.

YOU'RE ONE HILARIOUS LANDLADY, MRS. GUNDERSON.

SPARTAN, I SUPPOSE, IS THE POLITE WAY TO PUT IT.

SO YOU WERE GOING TO TIP ME TO ANGEL'S WHEREABOUTS.

GIVE ME A BREAK. IT'S A WORK IN PROGRESS. ZANE'S GIVEN ME A WEEK OFF TO CONSIDER A FULL-TIME OFFER. I'D RATHER CONSIDER IN MY OWN SPACE.

ON CALL IN CALIFORNIA. BUFFY SENT UP A FLARE.

WHATEVER'S SPILLED, YOU'LL HAVE TO CLEAN IT UP *YOURSELF* THIS TIME.

YOU KNOW, IT OCCURS TO ME...

...A SLAYER'S JUST AS GOOD AS AN ANGEL WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE.

SO. THAT GEOMETRY TEST. NOTHING BUT AGGRO, AM I RIGHT?

HUH?

OH, HI, MARY. YEAH, I GUESS.

THE ONE NEXT WEEK IS SUPPOSED TO BE EVEN HARDER. MIGHT BE A GOOD IDEA TO, UH, GRAB A *STUDY BUDDY* FOR SOME SERIOUS CRAMMING.

WHATEVER. I'M OFF.

OH. YES...WELL. BYE, THEN.

LET'S NOT FOOL OURSELVES, DARLING. HOW ABOUT YOU STICK TO YOUR OWN SPECIES?

WHAT? OH, I--NO, I'M NOT...I WOULDN'T...

SHUT UP, YOU LITTLE TWIT.

WHY THE HELL DON'T YOU STICK UP FOR YOURSELF?

ANNABELLE. NO, IT'S...JUST A MISUNDERSTANDING.

BOLLOCKS.

YOU KNOW WHAT THE DIFFERENCE IS BETWEEN A GIRL LIKE YOU AND A GIRL LIKE MEREDITH?

SHE *TAKES* WHAT SHE WANTS. SHE'S NOT WEAK. YOU *ARE.*

WHAT IF *WE* COULD SHOW YOU HOW TO BE *STRONG?*

BUT EVEN THE WEAK *WANT* THINGS, AND YOU DO WANT YOUR BOY, DON'T YOU?

THANK YOU, BUT THAT'S OKAY. GOT TO BE GOING, ACTUALLY. SORRY. OFF TO CHEMISTRY.

SHE'LL COME AROUND, ALL RIGHT. WHEN SHE'S *DESPERATE* ENOUGH.

THANKS FOR GETTING BACK TO ME, FAITH. I KNOW YOU'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A MOVE.

ANGEL HAD TO LEAVE IRELAND PRETTY QUICKLY TO LOOK INTO THIS ARCHAEUS CHARACTER. HE HOPED WE COULD TEAM UP AND EXPLORE SOME CONNECTIONS HERE IN LONDON.

WHEN YOU TOLD ME ABOUT THE PREP-SCHOOL PART OF ANGEL'S DREAMS, I FIGURED I'D BETTER INVITE YOU ALONG. I THINK I'VE STUMBLED UPON A LINK.

ANY POTENTIAL LINK IS WORTH A LOOK. WHY THIS PARTICULAR NEIGHBORHOOD?

THERE'S A GREAT FISH-AND-CHIPS PLACE AROUND THE CORNER... AMONG OTHER REASONS.

OTHER REASONS?

YEAH, UH, NO BIG DEAL. I TOLD INSPECTOR BRANDT I'D EYEBALL A SITUATION FOR HIM. AND FOR REASONS WHICH SHOULD BE PRETTY OBVIOUS, I THINK BRANDT'S DEAL MIGHT BE LINKED TO ANGEL'S PROBLEM.

WAIT. BRANDT. IS HE THE HANDSOME ONE?

NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

HE JUST NEEDS A SLAYER OPINION. BUT AFTER YOU CALLED ME FROM IRELAND AND MENTIONED THOSE STUDENTS...

NEXT YOU'LL SAY THE POLICE DISCOVERED SOME MYSTERIOUS DEAD BODY.

DID I TELL YOU THIS ALREADY?

UH-OH.

IN HERE?

BRONZE AGE

COME ON. WE'LL STAY JUST LONG ENOUGH TO CHECK IT OUT.

SO, DO I GET DETAILS? OR DOES THIS ALL UNFOLD DRAMATICALLY AS WE GO ALONG FOR MY ENTERTAINMENT?

THIS PLACE AFTER CLOSING TIME. HANGOUT FOR THE LOCAL PREP-SCHOOL KIDS. DEAD BODY. YOUNG GIRL. EYEBROWS RAISED.

CHECK. PREP SCHOOL. I'M SENSING A THEME.

HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN HERE BEFORE. FRESHEN THAT DRINK FOR YOU?

WE'RE FINE. THANKS.

HANG ON. WASN'T TALKING TO *YOU*, WAS I?

HOW 'BOUT YOU, LOVE? MAYBE WE COULD GET OUT OF HERE.

PLEASE, I'M OLD ENOUGH TO BE... YOUR OLDER SISTER.

SUIT YOURSELF. I'LL BE AROUND IF YOU GET THE ITCH.

GET THE *WHAT?!*

GOING TO POWDER MY NOSE. WHEN I GET BACK, YOU WON'T BE LAUGHING ANYMORE.

DEAL.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO TART UP FOR ME, LOVE. I LIKE YOU JUST HOW YOU ARE.

YOU'VE *GOT* TO BE KIDDING.

LOOK, CONFIDENCE IS ONE THING, BUT NOW YOU'RE JUST ***ANNOYING.*** YOUR COCKY ACT ISN'T ATTRACTIVE.

THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO FALL BACK ON MY MORE *BASIC* CHARMS.

GASP

NO!

AHEM.

WHAP

SHOULD HAVE SMELLED *VAMP* ON YOU A MILE AWAY, BUT YOUR CHEAP COLOGNE COVERED IT UP.

CHOOSE YOUR NEXT WISECRACK CAREFULLY, DUCK.

IT'LL BE YOUR *LAST.*

FWAP

KSSH

KRASH

WE'LL HAVE OUR SPECIAL MOMENT IN A TICK, LOVE. IN THE MEANTIME...

SOD OFF!

OI!

SMASH

PAFT

SO I TOLD HER IF ROGER'S GOING TO ACT LIKE THAT, SHE'S BETTER OFF--

WHAT THE BLOODY--?!

UH...

RESTROOM IS OUT OF ORDER.

I NEED TO CALL BRANDT. HE NEEDS TO KNOW MY *OBSERVATION* TURNED INTO A *HANDS-ON* OUTING.

TELL HIM HE OWES ME A BLOUSE.

WAIT. WHAT?

DAMN. LOOK, THERE'S A PLACE I KNOW JUST A TUBE STOP AWAY FROM WHERE YOU ARE. I'LL BUY YOU AND YOUR FRIEND A PROPER DRINK. WE NEED TO TALK.

NOODLE

HITTING THE BOOKS AGAIN, MARY? LATE AFTERNOON AT THE LIBRARY? YOU KNOW, I THINK YOU *LOVE* IT AT THIS SCHOOL.

=GASP=

UH, I GUESS. LOOK, I'VE GOT TO BE GOING, BECAUSE--

ARE YOU SAYING YOU DON'T *WANT* OUR HELP?

OH... BLYTHE. NO, I... I...

FRIGHTENED, LITTLE BIRD? FLY!

FLY AWAY!

HAHA HAHAHA HA HA HAHAHA HAHAHA HA HA

JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

PANT PANT PANT

MARY, MARY, QUITE CONTRARY.

COME ON, MARY. WE'RE JUST PLAYING. DON'T BE SHY.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE WEAK ANYMORE, MARY.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID.

"ARE YOU SAYING WE HAVEN'T SOLVED YOUR VAMP PROBLEM?"

I'D JUST FINISHED BAGGING ANOTHER BODY ACROSS TOWN WHEN YOU CALLED. FANG MARKS YOU'D RECOGNIZE.

THE TIMING IS IFFY. I SUPPOSE THE SWAGGER BOY YOU DUSTED COULD HAVE *THEORETICALLY* HOPPED IN A TAXI AND RACED OVER TO THE BRONZE AGE.

BUT ANOTHER BITER SEEMS MORE LIKELY.

I'D VAINLY HOPED FOR A LONE VAMPIRE. ANGEL HELPED ME OUT WITH A SIMILAR PROBLEM BEFORE.

BUGGER. NEST. PLEASE DON'T SAY *NEST.*

BUT NOW YOU'RE WORRIED YOU'VE GOT A NEST.

ANGEL TOLD ME ABOUT THAT.

SOME PREP-SCHOOL KID NAMED PARNELL.

YEAH. *EXACTLY.* ALL THE KILLINGS HAVE A CONNECTION TO ST. CUTHBERT'S.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

WHAT I REALLY NEED IS SOMEBODY ON THE INSIDE.

MAYBE SOMEBODY WITH >AHEM< SLAYING EXPERIENCE...?

LISTEN UP! COACH MERRIWEATHER IS *OFF* FOR THE WEEK.

I'M YOUR ***SUBSTITUTE,*** MISS LEHANE.

OKAY, LET'S KEEP IT SIMPLE.

SERVE IT UP, AND LET'S GET A GAME GOING.

INCOMING SERVE!

PANG

HEY!

THAT'S A *POINT*, RIGHT?

I'M A NATURAL ATHLETE.

OR WE CAN ALL RUN *LAPS* FOR AN HOUR.

AND THEN AFTER CLASS, *YOU TWO*--

IN MY OFFICE.

LOOK, I DON'T KNOW, AND I DON'T *WANT* TO KNOW.

WHATEVER YOUR ANGSTY TEEN CONFLICT IS, PUT IT ASIDE FOR AN HOUR A DAY FOR THE NEXT WEEK, OKAY? BECAUSE *I* DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH IT.

FINE.

YES, MA'AM.

WELL. OKAY, THEN. KUMBAYA ACHIEVEMENT UNLOCKED.

GO ON THEN. GET DRESSED.

MARY, IS IT?

LOOK, I KNOW I DIDN'T JUST COME OFF AS VERY TOUCHY-FEELY, BUT I *WILL* LISTEN IF YOU NEED TO TALK ABOUT SOMETHING.

I...

IT'S OKAY. SORRY. I NEED TO GET HOME. SORRY.

GIRLS LOCKER ROOM

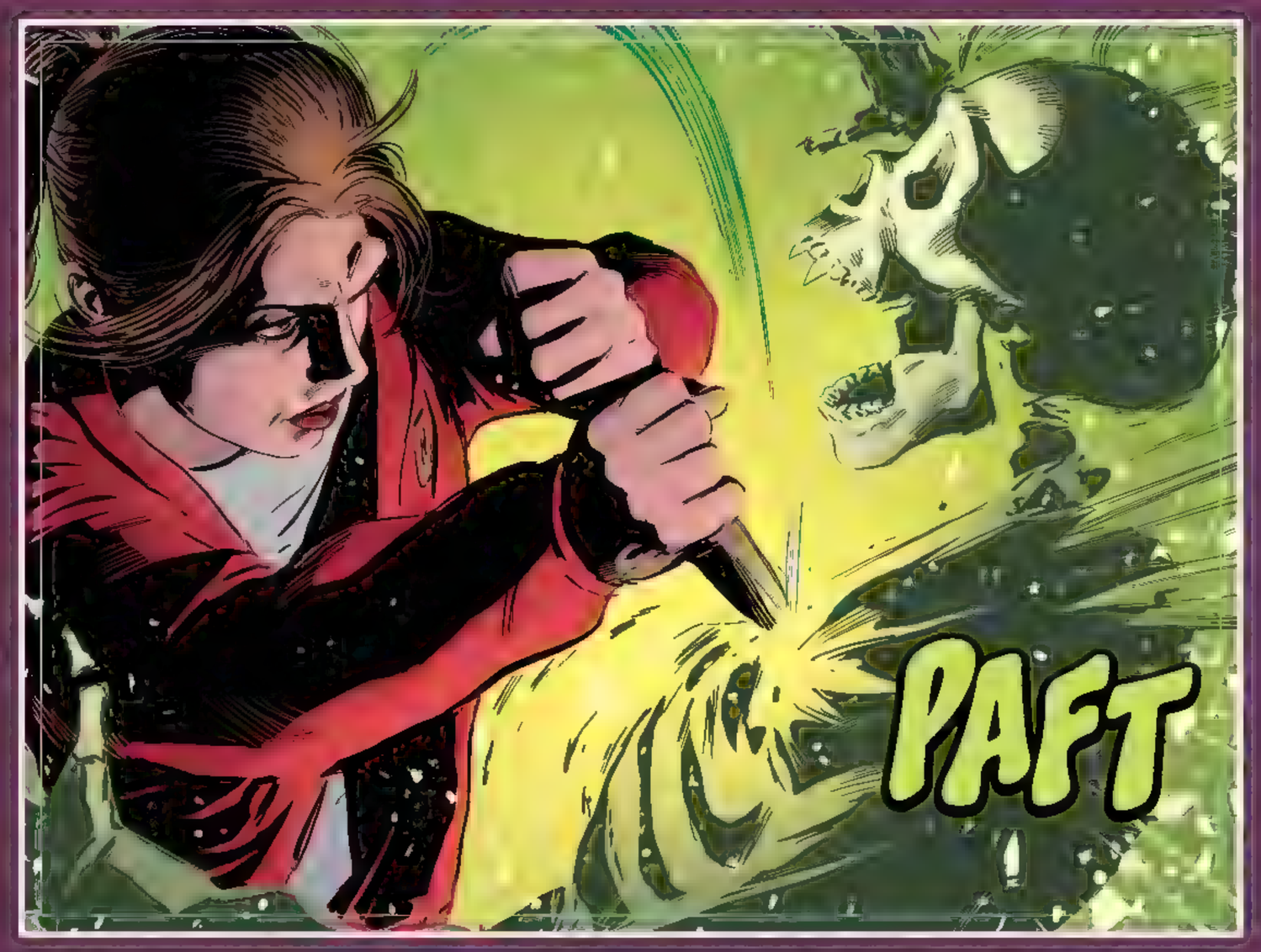
AIIIEE!

WHAT--?!

I-I JUST *FOUND* HER LIKE THIS.

I *SWEAR* IT.

OH NO.


PAFT

S. Fischbach

WE CLEARED EVERYONE OUT AND SEARCHED THE PLACE. LOOKS LIKE JUST THE ONE VICTIM.
POLICE

JUST *ONE*, HUH? THAT'S A REAL WIN.
FAITH, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BUT--
POLICE
DO YOU? I'M SUPPOSED TO BE A *SLAYER*, AND THAT GIRL WAS KILLED RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE. YOU WANTED ME ON THE INSIDE SO I COULD GET *CLOSE* TO THINGS AND HELP.
LOOK HOW THAT WORKED OUT.

THOSE WHO CAN'T TEACH, TEACH GYM
PART TWO

WHAT ABOUT THIS GIRL? MARY. YOU'RE *SURE* SHE DIDN'T DO IT?

SHE WAS CRYING WHEN I FOUND HER, SO I GAVE HER A HAND MIRROR AND TOLD HER TO FIX HER MAKEUP.

WHY WOULD--

OH.

THE OTHER STUDENT KILLINGS ALL HAPPENED *OFF CAMPUS,* BUT THIS NEW ONE WILL BRING THE SITUATION HOME IN A WAY WE CAN'T HUSH UP. SO WE'RE NOT TELLING ANYONE YET THAT SHE'S DEAD, JUST CALLING IT SOME KIND OF *ACCIDENT.*

AN ACCIDENT?

IT'S NOT A STORY THAT WILL HOLD UP LONG. TWENTY-FOUR HOURS. AFTER THAT THEY'LL BE *SCREAMING* TO SHUT DOWN THE SCHOOL.

MAYBE THAT'S THE BEST IDEA.

AHEM

WELL, THERE ARE *PRACTICAL* CONSIDERATIONS.

TRANSLATION: I'M NOT GOING TO LIKE THIS.

LIKELY NOT.

RIGHT NOW WE MORE OR LESS KNOW THE EPICENTER OF THE PROBLEM.

WE CLOSE THE SCHOOL, THEN WHO KNOWS WHERE THE VAMPS BUGGER OFF TO? AND ***WHEREVER*** THEY GO, THEY'LL BE FEEDING ON ***SOMEBODY.*** AT LEAST IF WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE, WE CAN MAKE SOME KIND OF PLAN TO TRAP THESE VAMPIRES.

SOUNDS LIKE I'M STILL ON GYM-TEACHER DUTY.

YES, IF YOU'RE WILLING. I ***NEED*** YOU.

WE NEED TO ***GET*** THEM BEFORE THEY CLAIM ANY MORE VICTIMS. THIS NEEDS TO ***END.***

OKAY. I GET THE STRATEGY. YOU CAN'T STAKE OUT THE WATERING HOLE IF IT'S CLOSED. BUT I'VE GOT ***ONE*** CONDITION.

I'M ***NOT*** LOSING ANOTHER KID. IF I SAY WE PULL THE PLUG, THEN THAT'S IT.

FAIR ENOUGH.

MARY'S MOTHER IS KEEPING HER HOME TOMORROW. SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ***HER*** AT LEAST. SHE'LL BE SAFE ENOUGH.

ONE MORE THING. I WANT YOU AND FRED TO BE ***CAREFUL.*** SOMETHING GOES PEAR SHAPED, HIT THE PANIC BUTTON, AND MY OFFICERS AND I WILL SWOOP IN. IF WE TAKE ENOUGH PRECAUTIONS--

THERE ARE ***NEVER*** ENOUGH PRECAUTIONS. I'M ONLY GOING ALONG WITH THIS BECAUSE THERE AREN'T ANY ***BETTER*** IDEAS HANDY.

I WISH I COULD THINK OF ONE.

I JUST CAN'T PICTURE YOU AS A TEACHER.

GYM TEACHER. VOLLEYBALL AND HYGIENE FILMS.

BUT HOLD ON A SEC. YOU'RE TELLING ME *B* AND *SPIKE* ARE AN ITEM AGAIN, AND YOU THINK THE BIG NEWS IS I'M POSING AS A TEACHER?

DENY MUCH?

WHAT? NO. IT'S **FINE.**

WHY WOULDN'T IT BE FINE?

DON'T YOU THINK IT'S FINE?

CAN WE GET BACK TO THE SUBJECT AT HAND?

GLADLY. YOU WERE SAYING THIS ARCHAEUS JOKER WAS SOME KIND OF ÜBERDEMON? NOT QUITE AN OLD ONE, BUT MORE BADASS THAN AVERAGE?

HE SENT AN ASSASSIN DEMON. JUST FINISHED UP WITH HIM A FEW MOMENTS AGO.

IN FACT, WE'RE ABOUT TO GEAR UP HERE IN FIVE MINUTES AND GO ON A DEMON HUNT, BUT I WANTED TO TOUCH BASE WITH YOU FIRST. THE DREAMS ARE DEFINITELY FROM ARCHAEUS, AND HE'S GOT BOOTS ON THE GROUND TO CARRY OUT HIS DIRTY WORK.

MORE BAD NEWS. HE CONTROLS A PORTAL TO THE HELL DIMENSION. GILES SAYS UNLESS HE'S STOPPED, ARCHAEUS CAN TURN OUR WHOLE WORLD INTO DEMON DISNEYLAND.

BUT HOW DOES THAT CONNECT TO WHAT'S HAPPENING *HERE?*

IF ARCHAEUS HAS AN INTEREST IN THAT SCHOOL, THEN IT ISN'T JUST VAMPIRES FEEDING RANDOMLY. *SOMETHING'S* UP.

THE SITUATION AT ST. CUTHBERT'S IS WORSE THAN WE THOUGHT, BUT DON'T WORRY, ANGEL. WE'RE ON IT. IF ARCHAEUS IS AFTER SOMETHING *SPECIFIC,* WE'LL FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.

HOW'S FRED? I'M WORRIED ABOUT HER BEING INVOLVED IN THIS. I MEAN, SHE'S PERFECTLY CAPABLE...

I'M KEEPING AN EYE ON HER. FRANKLY, I'M HAPPY FOR HER HELP.

FRONT AND CENTER, WANKER. THEY'RE HANDING OUT THE SWORDS.

DAMN IT, THAT'S SPIKE. I'VE GOT TO GO.

GIVE MY BEST TO LITTLE G.

ONE MORE THING. I'M SORRY I'M NOT THERE TO WATCH YOUR BACK. I **KNOW** YOU'RE A SLAYER AND CAN HANDLE YOURSELF FINE, BUT YOU STILL MIGHT NEED SOME BACKUP.

AND...WELL... I **MIGHT** HAVE AN IDEA ABOUT THAT.

THE NEXT MORNING

MARY? MARY, DO YOU WANT SOME TEA?

I'M JUST GOING TO REST IN MY ROOM, MOTHER. MAYBE DO SOME READING.

I MEAN, DID YOU *SEE* WHAT SHE WAS WEARING? I ALMOST TOSSED MY COOKIES RIGHT THEN AND--

WHAT DID YOU *DO*?!

WHAT THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

YOU *KNOW* WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT!

DON'T TRY TO LIE TO ME. I HAD TO COME TO SCHOOL TODAY SO I COULD FIND YOU AND TELL YOU TO *LEAVE ME ALONE.*

SO THE KITTEN HAS *CLAWS* NOW?

PURR FOR ME, KITTEN.

YOU KILLED MEREDITH. YOU...YOU *MONSTERS.*

WORD AROUND THE SCHOOL IS SOMEBODY FELL AND HAD AN ACCIDENT. ANYTHING ELSE IS *NUTTER* TALK.

SHE'LL RAT ON US, ANNABELLE.

MAYBE WE SHOULD SHUT HER UP. PERMANENT LIKE.

SHE WON'T TALK. WE JUST NEED TO HELP HER RECOGNIZE THE *OPPORTUNITY* STARING HER IN THE FACE. IF SHE DOESN'T, WE'LL SIMPLY *FORCE* THE ISSUE.

SO...UH... WHAT'S GOOD TODAY?

WHAT'S *GOOD?* I THINK IT'S A TIE BETWEEN THIS GLAMOROUS HAIRNET AND HOW I SMELL LIKE *GREASE.* DO YOU KNOW HOW LONG IT TAKES TO MAKE BANGERS AND MASH FOR FOUR HUNDRED KIDS?

NEXT TIME WE GO UNDERCOVER, I'LL BE THE TEACHER AND *YOU* CAN BE THE LUNCH LADY.

HEARD ANY SCUTTLEBUTT ABOUT OUR POINTY-TOOTHED FRIENDS?

IT'S AMAZING HOW *LITTLE* YOU HEAR WASHING DISHES.

I'LL SAY THIS. THE KIDS COMING THROUGH THIS LUNCH LINE ARE *TENSE.* EVERYONE'S HEARD THE POPULAR GIRL HAD AN "ACCIDENT."

WHAT ABOUT ANGEL? YOU TALKED TO HIM, RIGHT?

YEAH. OUR FRIEND GIVING HIM THE BAD DREAMS MIGHT BE A DISTANT RELATION. LIKE, ALL THE WAY BACK TO DARLA AND THE MASTER.

READER'S DIGEST VERSION: LIKE WE THOUGHT, THIS ISN'T JUST A PROBLEM WITH A FEW OF OUR PASTY-SKINNED PALS. IT'S CONNECTED TO ANGEL'S SITUATION.

JUST KEEP YOUR EYES AND EARS OPEN. AND KEEP A *STAKE* HANDY.

I NEVER LEAVE HOME WITHOUT ONE.

DO YOU WANT JELL-O?

I DO NOT.

IT'LL GET SORTED, MATE. HAVE YOU HEARD ANYTHING?

ALL I KNOW IS THE SAME AS EVERYONE ELSE. MEREDITH'S HAD SOME KIND OF ACCIDENT.

PRETTY, ISN'T HE?

YOU COULD MAKE HIM FORGET ALL ABOUT MEREDITH. YOU JUST NEED TO BE BRAVE. LIKE *US*.

YOU CAN *HAVE* HIM. I CAN ARRANGE IT. JUST JOIN OUR LITTLE CLUB.

SOON WE WON'T ASK NICELY ANYMORE. WE'LL JUST MAKE YOU--

MARY?

OH... UH...MISS LEHANE.

IS THERE A PROBLEM HERE?

NO PROBLEM, MISS. JUST SAYING HELLO TO OUR GIRL MARY.

YOU THINK ON WHAT I SAID.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE STAYING *HOME* TODAY.

OH... UH...

LOOK, I GET PRIVACY. FOND OF IT MYSELF. BUT IF THERE'S SOMETHING YOU WANT TO TELL ME, YOU CAN.

I WAS JUST A LITTLE SHOOK UP, IS ALL. I KNOW I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO BE HERE, BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO FALL BEHIND ON MY SCHOOLWORK, DID I?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE *NERVOUS*, MARY. IF THERE'S SOMETHING I CAN DO TO HELP--

I'M SORRY. I'LL GO BACK HOME AT ONCE. THEY CAN CALL MUM FOR ME IN THE FRONT OFFICE.

YOU THINK SHE'S TELLING HER?

DON'T KNOW, DO I?

THE REAL QUESTION IS, DO WE RISK IT? THE BOSS KEEPS WANTING US TO SOFT SELL NEW RECRUITS. KEEP IT QUIET.

IT'S EASIER WHEN THEY VOLUNTEER. TOO MUCH SLOPPINESS ATTRACTING ATTENTION LATELY. LIKE THAT GIT AT THE BRONZE AGE. FEELING HIS OATS AND HITTING ON SOME OLD BIRD IS WHAT I HEARD. WE DO IT *RIGHT,* NOBODY EVEN KNOWS ANYTHING'S HAPPENED.

BUT WE'RE BEYOND THAT NOW. THEY GET SCARED, THEY TALK. IF MARY RATS ON US--

FINE. YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT. WE JUST NEED THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY, IS ALL.

OI, KEEP IT DOWN. PRYING EARS.

FORGET HER.

IT'S JUST THE LUNCH LADY.

I know the truth about Meredith. Tell no one! Important.

A friend!

FAITH? I PUT THE MIRROR ON THOSE THREE YOU MENTIONED. YEAH, THE *CREEPY* ONES. JUST LIKE YOU THOUGHT.

AND I HEARD THEM TALKING EARLIER ABOUT SOMETHING GOING ON TONIGHT. I GUESS THAT COULD BE *ANYTHING*. BUT PROBABLY NOT ANYTHING *GOOD*.

AS SOON AS YOUR SHIFT IS OVER, TOSS THE HAIRNET AND TAKE OFF. GLAD TO HAVE YOUR EYES AND EARS, BUT IF THINGS GET HAIRY, WE DON'T WANT TO STRESS ILLYRIA.

I'M GOING TO HANG BACK AFTER VOLLEYBALL PRACTICE.

IT'S TIME TO BENCH THE COACH AND LET THE SLAYER OUT TO PLAY.

HELLO?

GOT YOUR NOTE.

COME ON, WHERE THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU?

SHANE, IT'S ME.

YES. HELLO, MARY.

THE NOTE SAID YOU KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT MEREDITH.

IT'S NOT FAIR THEY'D KEEP IT FROM YOU. I JUST HAD TO TELL YOU. IT'S NOT RIGHT TO--

SO *TELL ME* ALREADY!

SHE'S *DEAD*, SHANE.

I *KNOW*, MARY. IT'S OKAY.

WHAT? YOU KNOW?

I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

GOOD NIGHT, MISS LEHANE.

HAVE A GOOD ONE, LADIES.

CATCH YOU TOMORROW.

WSHH

WHAT THE...?

SLAM

SURPRISE!

WHAP

SMAK

I WOULD SAY WE *USUALLY* HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR TEACHERS.

BUT THAT'S BOLLOCKS.

WHAT WE *REALLY* WANT TO KNOW IS WHAT YOU AND OUR MARY WERE TALKING ABOUT AT LUNCH.

WHAM

'CAUSE WE'VE GOT *PLANS* FOR THAT GIRL.

KRANCH

STILL CONSCIOUS? I GUESS GYM TEACHERS ARE MADE OF STERNER--

I'VE BEEN EATING MY WHEATIES.

SWAP

HEY!

PAFT

SHE MUST BE A *SLAYER!*

HOOF IT!

VOOSSSHHHHH

WHOA. *NOT* FIVE BY FIVE.

BAP

WHAP

HAHAHAHAHA

IF YOU'RE A SLAYER, I CAN'T SAY I'M IMPRESSED.

HMMM. I WONDER HOW SLAYERS *TASTE.*

THOK

PAFT

GASP

POOF

YOU OKAY?

YEAH. NEW VAMPS CAN TURN INTO MIST AND BATS, AND THEY'RE *HARDER* TO KILL.

HEY, DIDN'T I TELL YOU TO CLEAR OUT OF HARM'S WAY?

FIRST, YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME. SECOND, ILLYRIA'S CALM SO FAR. I'LL LET YOU KNOW IF SHE STARTS GETTING RESTLESS. THIRD, *YOU'RE WELCOME.*

BESIDES, I THOUGHT WE WERE TEAM GIRL POWER ON THIS ONE.

OKAY, FAIR POINTS, AND YES, THANKS FOR TIMELY CROSSBOWMANSHIP.

BUT RIGHT NOW I NEED YOU TO RUN AN *ERRAND.*

MARY, THIS IS *IMPORTANT.* I KNOW THINGS MAY SEEM CONFUSING TO YOU RIGHT NOW, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN. CAN WE HAVE A NICE, CALM CHAT?

YES. OKAY.

HAVE YOU TOLD ANYONE WHAT YOU'VE TOLD ME? ABOUT MEREDITH, I MEAN. HER BEING KILLED. YOU NEED TO *TRUST* ME.

I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING, BUT FIRST I NEED TO KNOW THE *TRUTH.*

THE POLICE TOLD ME TO STAY HOME AND NOT TALK TO ANYONE. BUT I WANTED YOU TO KNOW. I WAS SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU AND--

I DIDN'T TELL THEM. I WOULDN'T. BUT THE POLICE...

YOU'VE NOT TOLD THE HEADMASTER, OR THE POLICE, OR THAT NEW GYM TEACHER?

I WAS AFRAID THAT'S WHAT YOU MIGHT SAY.

NO! WHAT--?!

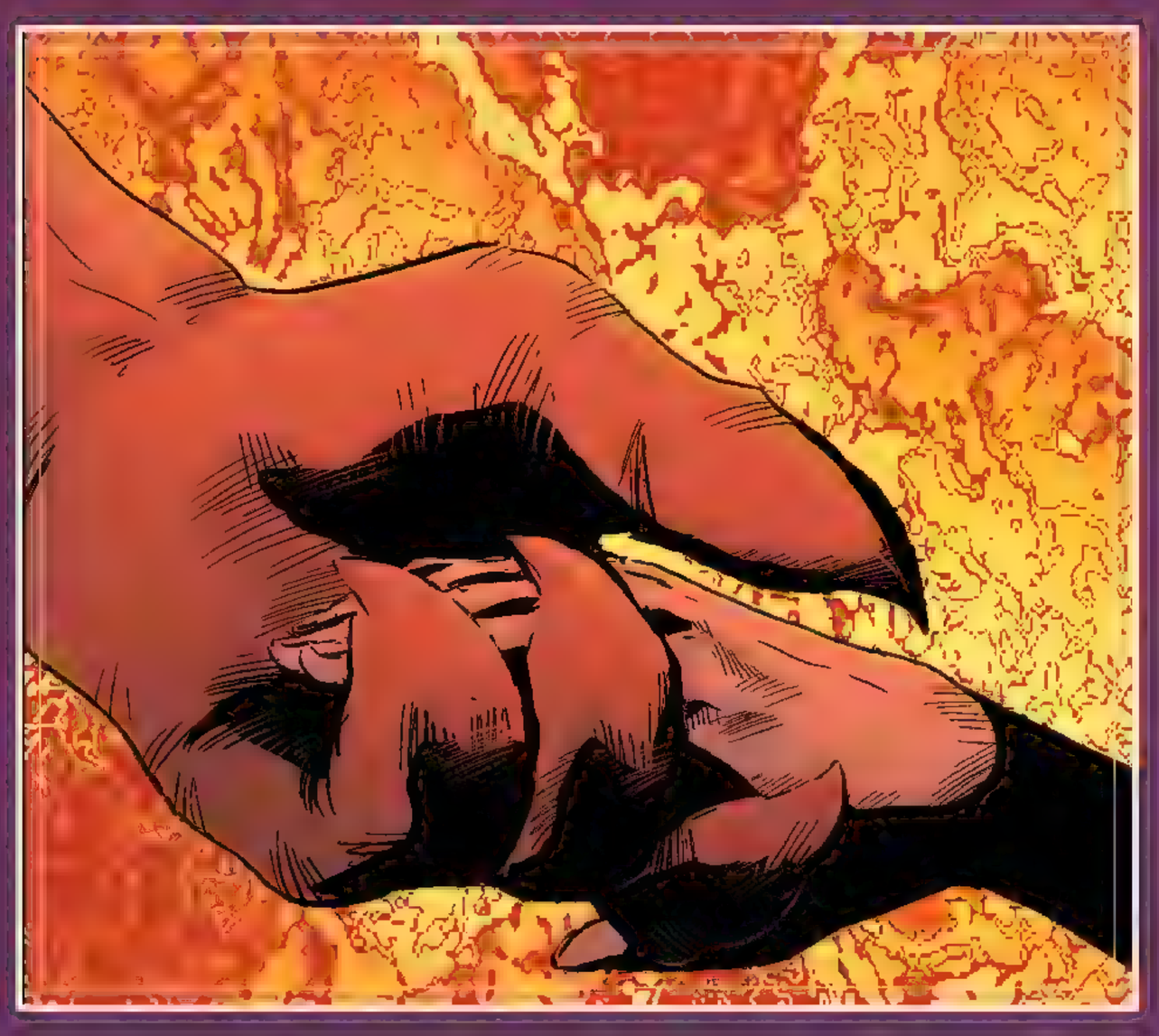
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MISTRESS?

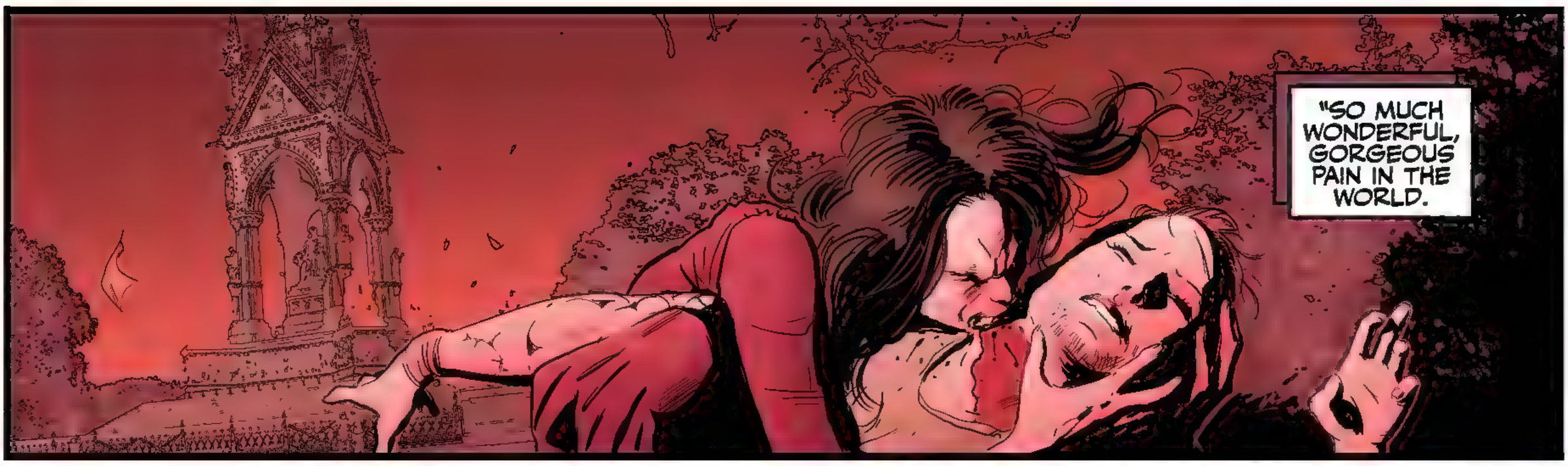
ARE YOU SURE THIS LITTLE MOUSE IS THE ONE YOU WANT?

DARLING CHILD. SUCH CRUEL WHIMSY. YOU DO MAKE DEATH DELICIOUS AGAIN.

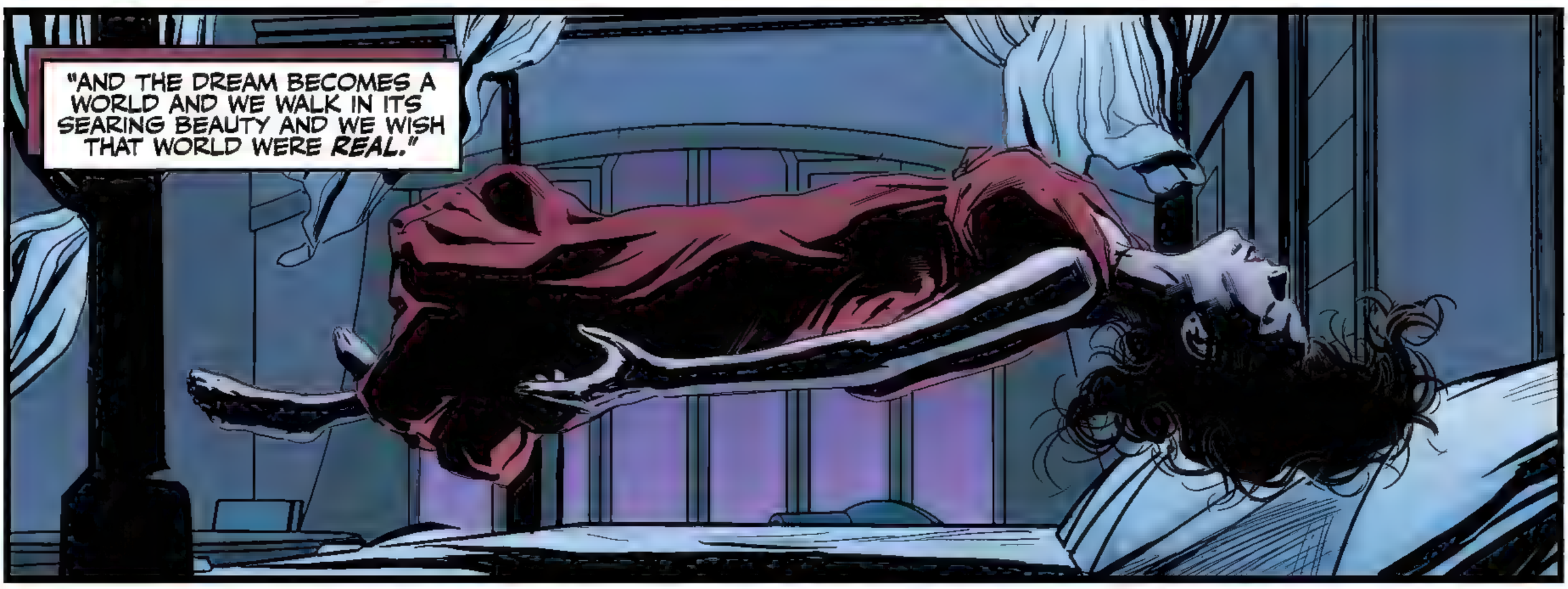
OUR LITTLE MARY IS *SPECIAL* AND WILL BE DOING US A SPECIAL FAVOR. I'M SURE SHE'LL BE HAPPY TO DO IT.

ONCE SHE'S ONE OF US.




"SO MUCH WONDERFUL, GORGEOUS PAIN IN THE WORLD.

"AND LIKE SO MANY *WONDERFUL* THINGS, IT STARTS WITH A DREAM.


"AND THE DREAM BECOMES A WORLD AND WE WALK IN ITS SEARING BEAUTY AND WE WISH THAT WORLD WERE *REAL.*"

THOSE WHO CAN'T TEACH, TEACH GYM
PART THREE

"AND THEN SOMETHING HAPPENS, SOMETHING YOU DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE YOU'D BEEN WAITING FOR, BUT YOU WERE.

"SOMEBODY COMES ALONG TO TELL YOU THE DREAM IS GOING TO BE THE WORLD FROM NOW ON. HE'S COME TO MAKE IT SO. AND HE WANTS YOUR HELP.

"BECAUSE YOU'RE SPECIAL."

ARCHAEUS...

"BECAUSE YOU *BELONG.*"

I USED TO HAVE FAMILY. THERE WAS A TIME.

ANGEL LEFT. AND THEN...SPIKE. DARLA.

WELL.

AND NOW YOU CAN BE ONE OF *US*, MARY.

YOU CAN BELONG.

P-PLEASE. I DON'T WANT TO BE ONE OF YOU. I WON'T TELL ANYONE. I WON'T--

BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT A VERY SPECIAL *HONOR* THIS IS.

YOU'RE TO BE OUR *LAST* CONVERT FROM ST. CUTHBERT'S.

WITH A *SLAYER* AND ALL OF THOSE TROUBLESOME POLICE SNOOPING AROUND, I'M AFRAID WE NEED TO FIND NEW FRIENDS *ELSEWHERE.*

A SHAME. WE'D BEEN SO CAREFUL UP UNTIL NOW IN OUR ATTEMPTS *NOT* TO DRAW ATTENTION, RECRUITING ONLY WHEN THE TIMING WAS RIGHT.

HAPPENED TO ME ON A CAMPING TRIP. BY MONDAY I WAS PART OF THE FAMILY. PARENTS NEVER SUSPECTED A THING, AND NEITHER DID THE SCHOOL.

I WAS GONE FOR A WEEKEND LOOKING AT UNIVERSITIES.

MY PARENTS GENERALLY DON'T *CARE* WHERE I AM.

AHEM YES.

THE *POINT* IS THAT WE TOOK CARE TO KEEP A LOW PROFILE.

BUT MUMMY'S BABIES GET *RESTLESS.* HER BABIES LEAVE BODIES WHERE THE POLICE CAN FIND THEM AND PICK FIGHTS WITH SLAYERS IN PUBLIC RESTROOMS.

MUMMY. IS. CROSS.

BUT LET'S NOT SPOIL THE OCCASION.

THIS IS *MARY'S* BIG NIGHT.

BUT WHY *ME?* I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING.

OH, DARLING, TRUST ME. YOU *NEED* THIS. YOU HAVE NOBODY.

YOU *ARE* NOBODY.

BUT THERE'S *MORE,* OF COURSE. YOU'RE A SMART GIRL. YOU MUST KNOW. YOU'RE GOING TO DO US A VERY SPECIAL FAVOR. WE HAD YOU PICKED OUT FROM THE BEGINNING, MY GOOD GIRL.

YOU'RE GOING TO HELP US CHANGE THE WORLD. SO MANY VOICES WHISPER TO ME, BUT A *NEW* VOICE-- STRONG AND CLEAR-- HE TOLD ME HOW VERY HELPFUL YOU CAN BE.

JUST A SWEET LITTLE STING, AND IT WILL ALL BE OVER.

SLAMM

AH, YES. OUR LOCAL SLAYER.

HOW PRECIOUS. YOU MUST *THINK* YOU'VE ARRIVED IN THE NICK OF TIME. BUT IN FACT--

SHAAK

AAIIEEEE

KILL HER!

COME GET SOME, KIDS!

WHAP

KRAK

THERE'S PLENTY OF SLAYER TO GO AROUND.

GASP

THE LUNCH LADY?!

I'M NOT A LUNCH--

OH, JUST COME WITH ME IF YOU WANT TO LIVE!

IS THAT THE *GYM TEACHER?*

NOW YOU SEE WHY THE TUITION HERE IS SO HIGH.

STUPID BOY! GET AFTER THEM. IF YOU LET THEM ESCAPE, LORD ARCHAEUS WILL FLAY YOU ALIVE!

YES, MISTRESS DRUSILLA!

I CAN'T BELIEVE SHANE IS A...IS A...

VAMPIRE.

WHY ARE THE GOOD-LOOKING ONES ALWAYS *JERKS?*

MODERN SCIENCE HASN'T ADVANCED FAR ENOUGH TO FIGURE THAT ONE OUT, I'M AFRAID.

DAMN IT.

THEY ALWAYS LOCK UP AFTER HOURS.

MARY, DON'T RUN.

YOU KNOW HOW THIS IS GOING TO END. YOU MIGHT AS WELL MAKE IT EASY. AND THEN WE CAN BE TOGETHER. I *KNOW* THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.

STILL THINK HE'S HANDSOME?

GET STUFFED, YA PRAT!

GRRRR

MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE ANTAGONIZED HIM.

LESS SECOND-GUESSING. MORE RUNNING.

WHERE ARE WE?

MR. ABERNATHY'S HISTORY CLASS.

FAITH. HOW NICE TO SEE YOU.

YOU HAVEN'T SAVED OUR LITTLE MARY, YOU KNOW. YOU'VE ONLY DELAYED THE *INEVITABLE.*

WHAK

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT INEVITABLE.

BUT I KNOW THERE'S ONE THING THAT'S BEEN A LONG TIME COMING.

YOUR ACTIONS ARE CHILDREN'S LIES YOU TELL YOURSELF IN LITTLE SINGSONGS. A MAKE-BELIEVE HERO WITH LITTLE WIND-UP SPRINGS.

SUCH A DELIGHTFUL OPPORTUNITY. BLOOD LIKE SYRUP. SUCH SWEET DESSERTS. SPIKE ALWAYS SAID THERE WAS NO TASTIER TREAT THAN TAKING DOWN A SLAYER.

I GUESS HE'D KNOW. WORD ON THE STREET IS HE'S TAKING BUFFY DOWN EVERY NIGHT.

SLAMM

YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME!

SO WHO'S HIDING?

TWANG

HA HAHAHA HA

THIP

NICE TRY.

NOW TELL ME WHERE THAT BIT OF FLUFF IS HIDING. I KNOW YOU'RE PROTECTING HER. I'D HATE TO STOP BEING *NICE*.

GET AWAY FROM HER!

SMAK

YOU MOUSY LITTLE GIT. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT MISTRESS DRUSILLA NEEDS *YOU* FOR. IF IT WERE UP TO ME, I'D--

EH?

GAH

DAMN NEW VAMPS =NNGH= ...HIDE LIKE... ARMOR.

MAY I OFFER YOU MY ASSISTANCE, MISS?

PLEASE!

GAAK

SHRIK

PAFT

YOU... OKAY?

SCHOOL IS *PANT PANT* HARD ENOUGH WITHOUT *PANT PANT* BLOODY VAMPIRES.

ALWAYS THE SURLY ONE, OUR FAITH.

IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE, LITTLE BARBED TONGUE?

YOUR LITTLE BEE STINGS?

AND *THAT'S* ALL YOUR WORDS ARE, REALLY. JUST LITTLE BEE STINGS.

ANY MORE PETTY INSULTS? ANY BEGGING YOU'D LIKE TO DO? ANY LAST-MINUTE TRICKS BEFORE I FINALLY SEE HOW SWEET SLAYER BLOOD CAN BE?

UH... LOOK BEHIND YOU?

DARLING FAITH. AMUSING TO THE END.

SORRY TO ARRIVE LATE, SLAYER. I CAME AS SOON AS I GOT FRED'S MESSAGE.

I TAKE IT YOU STILL NEED MY ASSISTANCE--OR AM I MISREADING THE SITUATION?

WOULD YOU JUST GET *DOWN* HERE ALREADY?

HAPPY TO OBLIGE.

WHAMM

KOH! DRU'S GETTING AWAY. STOP HER!

PAFT

I WOULD IF I COULD, SLAYER.

PAFT

PAFT

PAFT

KOH--WHERE'S DRUSILLA?

SACRIFICING HER MINIONS GAVE HER JUST ENOUGH TIME TO SLIP AWAY. I'M SORRY.

WE'VE SEARCHED THE SCHOOL TWICE. AND REST ASSURED, WE'LL BE SEARCHING A *THIRD* TIME.

BUT THE WAY YOU TELL IT, I THINK THE VAMPS ARE ALL DONE HERE.

I LET THE *WORST* ONE GET AWAY.

HEY, YOU DID *GOOD.*

VAMPS DEAD. SCHOOLGIRL ALIVE. THAT'S THE SORT OF MATH I'M KEEN ON.

BRANDT?

MARY. CAN I SPEAK TO HER?

I'LL ARRANGE IT.

YEAH.

WHAT DID MARY SAY?

SHE SAID DRU HAD SELECTED MARY FOR SOME SPECIAL REASON.

BUT MARY HAD NO IDEA WHY. THIS IS GOING TO KEEP BUGGING ME. I MEAN, WHY A SCHOOL AT ALL? WHY KIDS?

REMEMBER, IT'S DRUSILLA. SHE'S *CRAZY.*

AND ANYWAY, WE'RE TALKING VAMPIRES HERE. *PREDATORS.* AND PREDATORS TARGET CHILDREN. THAT'S UGLY, BUT THERE IT IS.

I WISH THAT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE.

DRUSILLA HAS BEEN RECRUITING MINIONS, BUT SHE HAD SOMETHING *SPECIAL* IN MIND FOR MARY. IT'S LIKE DRU IS LAYING GROUNDWORK, STAGING FOR SOMETHING THAT'S ABOUT TO COME AT US.

WHICH I THINK CONFIRMS WHAT WE'RE BOTH THINKING-- *ARCHAEUS.*

ANYWAY, BRANDT SAID HE'D RING ME IF HE HEARD ANYTHING.

AND ANGEL GETS BACK SOON.

WHEN WE COMPARE NOTES, MORE OF THIS WILL MAKE SENSE.

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

ME?

WELL, NOT *YOU.* ILLYRIA.

SHE'S UNDER CONTROL... MOSTLY.

THERE WAS A MOMENT WHEN THAT VAMP BOY HAD A HOLD ON ME. I THOUGHT I FELT HER TWINGE. JUST A LITTLE.

IT'S BEEN BETTER SINCE I GOT BACK FROM IRELAND. YEAH. BETTER. I MEAN, I KNOW IT'S SOMETHING WE NEED TO FIX SOONER OR LATER. BUT IT'LL KEEP. FOR NOW. I THINK.

I'LL TELL YOU ONE THING I LEARNED.

TEACHERS SHOULD BE *PAID* MORE.

AND LUNCH LADIES, TOO.

TING

ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T COME IN AND SEE DAD, MUM?

HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE *ME,* DARLING. THAT'S WHAT DIVORCES ARE FOR. YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE HE LOVES. HAVE A NICE VISIT.

BESIDES, YOU KNOW HOW STRANGE HE IS ABOUT HAVING PEOPLE IN THE HOUSE.

TAXI

BYE.

MARY. I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER GET HERE. I'M GLAD YOU CAN SPEND SOME TIME WITH ME AFTER THE TROUBLE AT THE SCHOOL. DON'T WORRY. I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU. YOU CAN REST.

BUT YOU'RE GOING TO SHOW ME THE STATUE, AREN'T YOU?

I SEE YOUR MOTHER'S BEEN TALKING.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE *RETIRED* FROM THE MUSEUM.

YES, WELL, THIS ARTIFACT IS SO SPECIAL THEY'RE LETTING ME HAVE A CRACK AT IT FOR A FEW MONTHS. THEY'RE EVEN LETTING ME KEEP IT HERE, WHERE I HAVE ALL MY BOOKS AND THINGS.

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT IT?

WHAT'S SPECIAL IS THAT IT'S *BAFFLING* EVERYBODY.

BUT NOT YOU?

ME TOO. FOR NOW.

THE MUSEUM WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO FIGURE OUT ITS ORIGIN, SO, WELL, I'M ON THE CASE, AREN'T I?

RATHER FEARSOME, ISN'T IT?

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU CAN FIGURE OUT WHERE IT'S FROM?

NEVER FRET, MARY. YOU KNOW HOW YOUR FATHER LOVES A GOOD MYSTERY.

The End.

SO THIS IS MAGIC TOWN. WHAT A DUMP.

COR, EVEN THE GITS WHO LIVE HERE ARE PLUG UGLY.

HOW RUDE!

SLAP

LET ME HELP YOU.

THANK YOU, DEARIE. BLOODY RUFFIANS. JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THIS NEIGHBORHOOD WAS A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE AGAIN.

HAHA HAHA HAHA HAHA

A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN

PART ONE

THIS ISN'T THE KIND OF PLACE WHERE YOU WANT TO MAKE ENEMIES, *JERKS.* THERE ARE PEOPLE AROUND HERE YOU DON'T WANT TO CROSS.

YOU DON'T MEAN THAT NOB *ANGEL,* DO YOU?

BECAUSE WE HEARD HE'D LEFT TOWN.

CRAP.

GO, LADY!

HAHAHAHA

RUN, RABBIT!

HAHA HAHAHAHA

I REALLY NEED TO INVEST IN A MAP OF THE AREA.

NO PLACE TO GO.

I'M *WARNING* YOU.

GO ON THEN. WARN US.

YEAH, WE'RE BLOODY TERRIFIED.

:GASP:

NOBODY AROUND. NO GUARDIAN *ANGEL.*

WHO WILL SAVE YOU NOW, LITTLE LAMB?

N-NO...

:NNGH:

NO!

AH. OKAY. OUR MISTAKE.

NO HARM DONE, RIGHT?

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE.

ZZWASH

POOF

FLAP FLAP FLAP FLAP

PAFT

OH, NO.

FOOM

GASP

DID YOU KNOW YOU SNORE?

ANGEL! YOU'RE BACK.

SORRY TO INTRUDE. SOPHRONIA SAID YOU WERE DAZED WHEN YOU CAME IN LAST NIGHT. SHE WAS WORRIED, SO I VOLUNTEERED TO KEEP YOU COMPANY.

YEAH, HAD A LITTLE EPISODE. BUT RIGHT NOW, I'M JUST GLAD YOU'RE HOME.

YOU UP FOR A POWWOW? THE TROOPS ARE DOWNSTAIRS, AND I'VE GOT NEWS.

WHY DO I THINK *"PROBLEM SOLVED"* ISN'T GOING TO BE THE THEME OF THIS POWWOW?

SORRY. MORE LIKE *PROBLEM EXACERBATED.*

OKAY, SO THE BAND'S BACK TOGETHER. WHAT'S THE WORD FROM THE LEFT COAST?

YOU KNOW I WENT TO CALIFORNIA TO HELP OUR FRIENDS WITH A CERTAIN DEMON PROBLEM–ARCHAEUS, THE VERY SAME DEMON THAT FATHERED MY LINE OF VAMPIRES.

I THINK MY SHOWING UP MIGHT HAVE BEEN JUST WHAT HE WANTED.

HE TRIED TO EXPLOIT HIS CONNECTION WITH ME AND SPIKE. I GUESS HE THOUGHT WE'D MAKE GOOD ADDITIONS TO HIS ARMY, BUT OUR HAVING SOULS WASN'T SOMETHING HE'D BARGAINED FOR.

WE DESTROYED A MAGICAL ARTIFACT CALLED THE ***RESTLESS DOOR*** THAT HE WAS USING TO OPEN A DIMENSIONAL PORTAL. ARCHAEUS HIMSELF GOT AWAY.

WE SENT HIM PACKING TO TRY HIS MYSTERIOUS SCHEME SOMEPLACE ELSE.

AND THAT PARTICULAR SOMEPLACE ELSE WOULD BE ***HERE.***

THAT'S THE SUM OF IT, YEAH.

SWELL.

WHY ON EARTH WOULD HE COME ***HERE*** WHEN YOU'D JUST GIVEN HIM A GOOD THRASHING IN CALIFORNIA?

I WOULDN'T CALL IT A ***THRASHING.***

AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM IS TOPS, BUT...IT MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH. I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT WHEN ARCHAEUS TOOK CONTROL OF ME, I MIGHT NOT HAVE MADE IT WITHOUT SPIKE TALKING ME BACK.

SO HIS PLAN IS TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER?

A SOUND MILITARY STRATEGY.

HE IS GATHERING STRENGTH *AND* SETTING THE TERMS FOR THE NEXT BATTLE. IF WE LET HIM.

AND IT GETS EVEN BETTER.

ARCHAEUS HAS AN *ADDITIONAL* ADVANTAGE HERE HE DIDN'T IN SAN FRANCISCO.

DRU.

ARCHAEUS HAS THE SAME CONNECTION WITH *HER* THAT HE DOES WITH ANGEL AND SPIKE BUT WITHOUT A *SOUL* TO GUM UP THE WORKS.

SO HE'S UPGRADED TO A PRETTY POWERFUL SIDEKICK.

AND HE'S LIKELY *LEARNED* FROM HIS FIRST ATTEMPT. WE NEED TO BE READY FOR WHATEVER *HIS* PLAN IS WITH *OUR OWN.*

SOUNDS LIKE AN ALL-HANDS-ON-DECK SITUATION. WELL, THEN. TIME TO *WEAPON UP,* AS THEY SAY.

AND A QUIVER OF BOLTS TOO, PLEASE, DARLING.

A-PLUS FOR *ENTHUSIASM*, BUT I DON'T THINK WE'RE READY FOR BATTLE STATIONS JUST YET. DRU WAS USING THAT PREP SCHOOL TO RECRUIT NEW VAMPS.

THEY'VE GOT *SOMETHING* IN MOTION, BUT WE CAN'T SEE ALL THE PUZZLE PIECES YET.

WE NEED TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE.

AGREED. ARCHAEUS WANTS *POWER*. HIS KIND ALWAYS DO.

WITH YOU OUT OF TOWN, I GOT THE FEELING THOSE VAMPIRES LAST NIGHT WERE SORT OF FEELING THINGS OUT, SEEING WHAT THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH. OR MAYBE THEY WERE SCOUTING TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE TOO.

IT IS SO WITH ANY PROPER BATTLE.

FIRST ONE PROBES FOR WEAKNESSES, ATTEMPTS TO ASCERTAIN WHERE DEFENSES ARE STRONG. I FEAR THEY MAY *ALREADY* KNOW MORE ABOUT US THAN WE DO OF THEM.

OKAY, THEN. IT'S EAR-TO-THE-GROUND TIME. FRED'S WITH ME. WE'LL CALL ON NADIRA AND SEE IF THE MAGIC IS ACTING UP.

FAITH, DOES A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED PATROL SEEM...WELL...OLD FASHIONED?

NO, IT'S COOL. I'LL TAKE KOH. AND WE'LL SWING BY RORY'S AND SEE IF THERE ARE ANY STRANGERS IN TOWN PUTTING OFF THE VILLAIN VIBE.

IF THERE'S SCUTTLEBUTT OUT THERE, WE'LL FIND IT.

MUMMY IS *VERY* DISAPPOINTED WITH HER BABIES.

YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS SAID THEY'D GO INTO MAGIC TOWN AND HAVE A BIT OF A LOOK-SEE. BUT *WHERE* ARE THEY?

MUMMY GETS *VERY* PUT OUT WHEN HER BABIES GET THEMSELVES KILLED INSTEAD OF DOING THEIR JOBS.

APOLOGIES, MISTRESS DRUSILLA. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED, BUT WE'LL FIND OUT AS SOON AS--

OI! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT HAPPENED.

YOU SENT THESE PONCY BASTARDS TO DO A MAN'S JOB.

THEY FEEL TOUGH BECAUSE THEY'VE GOT THEIR FANGS NOW. *WE* WERE TOUGH BEFORE.

HOW *DARE* YOU! I WON'T TAKE THAT FROM SOME SCRUFFY--

KRAK

WHAP

I DO LOVE IT WHEN MY DARLINGS COMPETE FOR MUMMY'S ATTENTION. YOU SHOULD HAVE A TREAT. SOMETHING *FUN.*

I'M SENDING YOU AND YOUR BROTHERS TO BRING ME SOMETHING *SPECIAL.*

WHAT'S THAT, MUM?

THE *KEY* TO MAGIC TOWN, OF COURSE.

SO THAT WAS A *PATROL.*

YEAH, REALLY MORE OF A BUFFY THING, BUT ANGEL THINKS WE NEED TO PULL DOUBLE DUTY. NOT ONLY FIND OUT WHAT THE DRU CREW IS UP TO BUT ALSO DO OUR BEST TO KEEP THE CITIZENS SAFE.

I DON'T THINK THEY REALIZED HOW MUCH THEY COUNTED ON HAVING ANGEL AROUND UNTIL HE SPLIT TOWN FOR A FEW DAYS.

AND WHAT OF YOUR LAW-ENFORCEMENT FRIEND? INSPECTOR BRANDT.

HE SAYS THEY'RE STILL PICKING UP THE PIECES AT ST. CUTHBERT'S. BUT SO FAR, NO MORE KILLINGS. THE VAMPS HAVE MOVED ON. ***WHERE*** IS THE QUESTION.

BRANDT SAYS IF HE HEARS ANYTHING USEFUL, HE'LL--

EXIT

WHAT THE HELL ***HAPPENED*** HERE?

BLOODY *VAMPIRES* HAPPENED, DIDN'T THEY?

ER, NO OFFENSE TO MR. ANGEL. OBVIOUSLY.

VAMPIRES DID THIS? WHY?

SEARCH ME, MISS. BUT THEY KEPT ASKING FOR *ANGEL.* SORT OF DARING HIM TO SHOW UP, LIKE. I TRIED TO TELL 'EM I DON'T HAVE THE MAN ON SPEED DIAL.

HUH. I GUESS THEY KNOW HE'S BACK.

IT COULD BE SOME KIND OF DIVERSION. WE SHOULD LET ANGEL KNOW AND ALSO SEE IF WE CAN CATCH UP WITH THOSE WHO DID THIS. THEY MIGHT STILL BE ROAMING THE STREETS.

ONE MOMENT, MISS.

YES?

I KNOW YOU'RE JUST RECENTLY BACK IN TOWN, BUT I'VE HEARD ABOUT YOU AN' ANGEL. SORT OF A *TEAM.*

PLEASE DO SOMETHING. I MEAN, I KNOW IT'S NOT MY PLACE TO ASK. BUT WE'VE ALL BEEN THROUGH A LOT ROUND HERE, WHAT WITH THE *CHANGE* AND ALL. IT WAS JUST GETTING TO WHERE IT COULD FEEL LIKE HOME AGAIN, YOU KNOW?

I MEAN, JUST WHATEVER YOU CAN DO. YOU AND ANGEL TOGETHER. IT WOULD MEAN A LOT TO ALL OF US.

I'LL DO... *WE'LL* DO OUR BEST.

BUT RORY'S OKAY?

GOOD. WE'RE HEADING TO NADIRA'S. LET'S REGROUP THERE.

WHAT WAS *THAT* ABOUT?

VAMPIRE GANG SMASHED UP THE PUB. RORY'S FINE, BUT THE PATRONS ARE SHAKEN UP A BIT.

SO MAYBE IT'S LIKE KOH SAID. THEY'RE *TESTING* US.

NO. I MEAN, ***YES,*** BUT IT SEEMS LIKE SOMETHING ELSE TOO.

IT'S ALMOST LIKE THEY'RE TAUNTING US OR TRYING TO KEEP US OFF GUARD.

I DON'T THINK ARCHAEUS IS READY TO STRIKE, AND THIS FEELS LIKE A WAY TO KEEP US GUESSING UNTIL HE IS.

YOU SAID THERE WAS SOMETHING ***ELSE*** YOU WANTED TO CHAT ABOUT TOO.

ILLYRIA. HOW'S SHE DOING IN THERE?

QUIET. AT THE MOMENT.

IF WE ***NEEDED*** HER, COULD YOU BRING HER BACK?

NEEDED HER? I...I DON'T KNOW.

SOMETIMES IT'S LIKE I CLEARLY KNOW WHAT SHE'S THINKING, ALMOST LIKE WE'RE SHARING THE SAME THOUGHTS. OTHER TIMES I ONLY GET A VAGUE FEELING, AND AT THE MOMENT THAT VAGUE FEELING IS THAT SHE DOESN'T WANT TO COME OUT.

BUT WHEN THOSE VAMPS *THREATENED* US, I THINK SOME KIND OF SELF-PRESERVATION THING KICKED IN. SHE JUST TOOK OVER AND--

WELCOME BACK, ANGEL. IT'S *UNFORTUNATE* YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO FINISH YOUR BUSINESS IN CALIFORNIA.

NOW THE TROUBLE IS ON OUR FRONT DOORSTEP.

I MISSED YOU TOO.

ANGEL! NADIRA SAID YOU WERE BACK. YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND HER, RIGHT?

AS FAR AS ARCHAEUS GOES, THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE. IT WOULD BE NICE TO GET *AHEAD* OF HIM FOR A CHANGE. HEARD ANYTHING?

YOU DON'T MEAN ME. YOU MEAN THE *MAGIC*.

WELL... YES.

THE MAGIC HAS BEEN CHATTERING NONSTOP SINCE YOUR RETURN. WE'RE ALL ON THE EDGE OF SOMETHING--

STEP AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, PLEASE.

THE WINDOW?

KRAK

NNGH

WHAP

WHUMP

YOU JUST STAY DOWN THERE, BOYO, AND WE'LL HAVE WHAT WE CAME FOR IN A SECOND.

WHAM

COME WITH US, LASS, AND WE'LL SHOW YOU A *GOOD TIME.*

EH?

NO TIME TO DANCE, GIRL. MAYBE NEXT TIME.

SMAK

I'VE GOT THE GOODS, LADS! CLEAR OUT.

NADIRA!

WHAP

NNGHN

ANGEL!

SSSSSS

ARGH

GRRRRR

LOOK OUT!

SWIK

SWAK

KRAK

UFF

YOU GOT YOUR LICKS IN, LITTLE MISS. BUT IT'S *ME* THAT ENDS UP ON TOP.

YOU *WISH.*

PAFT

FRED! ARE YOU OKAY?

WE'VE GOT TO GET HER BACK.

I'LL TAKE THE SHORTCUT.

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST GRAB A FRIEND OF MINE AND--

ANGEL, DARLING, ALWAYS SO DRAMATIC.

I THINK IT'S TIME WE TALKED ABOUT WELCOMING YOU BACK INTO THE FAMILY.

DRU, WHENEVER YOU USE A WORD LIKE *FAMILY,* IT JUST EMPHASIZES THAT YOU'RE NOT QUITE ALL THERE.

NOW LET GO OF NADIRA. AND WALK AWAY.

IT'S *YOU* WHO'VE FORGOTTEN, ANGEL. I AM WHAT *YOU* MADE ME.

BUT WE *BOTH* ANSWER TO A *HIGHER* PATRIARCH. OR DID YOU THINK YOU COULD CHANGE WHO YOU ARE JUST BECAUSE YOU'VE A LITTLE SOUL WRIGGLING ROUND INSIDE YOU? YOU DON'T GET TO *CHOOSE.*

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD REPLACE YOUR TRUE FAMILY WITH LITTLE BITS LIKE THIS?

A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN

PART TWO

I HEAR ARCHAEUS'S WORDS COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, DRU. HE TRIED TO GET HIS HOOKS INTO ME ONCE. I'M NOT GIVING HIM ANOTHER CHANCE.

I *AM* CHOOSING. THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS TO BE *FREE.*

SO RIGHTEOUS. SO *GOOD.*

AND WHAT ABOUT *ME* THEN? WHAT *CHOICES* DID ANGEL GIVE HIS LITTLE DRUSILLA?

YOU MADE ME ONE OF YOU, THEN *LEFT* ME.

NO DENIALS? WELL, THAT'S A START.

DADDY WANTS HIS CHILDREN ALL UNDER ONE ROOF AGAIN. YOU WERE PART OF US, ANGEL, AND YOU WILL BE AGAIN, EVEN IF IT MEANS--

ANGEL, DID YOU FIND--

OH.

AH, ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE LITTLE BITS OF DEBRIS THAT HAVE BLOWN INTO ANGEL'S LIFE.

YOU DO LIKE TO GATHER THEM AROUND, DON'T YOU? DO THEY MAKE YOU FEEL WARM AND LOVED, JUST AS IF YOU WERE A REAL BOY?

TAKE HIS MOUSY LITTLE PET TOO!

SSSSSSSS

ANGEL!

GRRRRR

PAFT

FRED!

PAFT

WHAP

UH-OH.

PAFT

FWAP

HANDS TO YOURSELF, HANDSOME.

PAFT

STEP LIVELY, PETS. WE STOLE THE GIRL FAIR AND SQUARE. LET'S GET HER BACK TO LORD ARCHAEUS.

FILE THAT UNDER *NICK OF TIME,* IF YOU WANT.

NADIRA! WHERE IS SHE?!

WHAT HAPPENED TO NADIRA?
DRUSILLA TOOK HER.
DRU WAS HERE IN MAGIC TOWN...I GUESS WE KNEW THAT WAS COMING.
SHE SLIPPED AWAY WHILE WE WERE MINION BASHING.
YES. SHE DOES THAT.
THEN WE FIND MISS CRAZY VAMP AND GET NADIRA *BACK.*
THAT MIGHT BE EXACTLY WHAT ARCHAEUS *WANTS.* HE SUCKERED US IN SAN FRANCISCO AND ALMOST HAD ME.
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT SAYING WE *DON'T* GO AFTER HER.
TRY TO IMAGINE MY LACK OF ENTHUSIASM FOR THAT PLAN.
I'M JUST SAYING WE NEED TO BE *SMART* ABOUT IT.
IF YOU DON'T THINK I WANT TO GET NADIRA BACK, THEN...WELL, THEN YOU'RE *NOT* THINKING. BUT I CAN'T RISK LOSING CONTROL AGAIN. ADDING *ME* TO THE LIST OF OUR PROBLEMS WON'T HELP.

RIGHT. IT'S COOL.

IT'S JUST THAT I FEEL ***RESPONSIBLE*** FOR HER. I WASN'T THERE FOR HER WHEN I LEFT MAGIC TOWN. I NEED TO BE NOW THAT I'M BACK.

AND I'M HERE TO ***HELP*** YOU.

WE ***ALL*** ARE. BUT WHEN THAT SOCCER-HOOLIGAN VAMP TOOK NADIRA, SHE HAD THE STRANGEST LOOK ON HER FACE. ALMOST LIKE...

LIKE SHE DIDN'T ***MIND*** BEING TAKEN. THEY TOOK HER ALIVE FOR A ***REASON.*** I THINK THAT GIVES US TIME TO GET ORGANIZED.

OKAY, ANGEL. HOW DO YOU WANT TO PLAY IT?

YOU TWO WORKED WITH INSPECTOR BRANDT WHILE I WAS GONE. I'M SURE HE'LL BE GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN. ROUND HIM UP. I KNOW A WAY WE CAN PUT HIM TO WORK.

CAN DO.

WE'RE GETTING NADIRA BACK. FIRST WE'VE GOT TO FIND ***WHERE*** THEY'VE TAKEN HER.

AND THEN MAYBE ***SHE*** CAN TELL US WHAT'S GOING ON.

THAT'S AN INTERESTING REQUEST, FAITH.

BUT I CAN SEE HOW IT MAKES SENSE.

ANGEL'S IDEA. HE THINKS IT WILL HELP US ZERO IN ON WHERE THEY ARE. YOU'VE GOT THE MANPOWER TO DO IT FAST AND THEN LET US KNOW WHAT YOU FIND OUT.

SHARP THINKING. I'LL GET IT DONE.

LOOK, ARE YOU SURE WE'RE READING THIS SITUATION RIGHT? I MEAN, THIS IS ***NADIRA.*** SHE DOESN'T SEEM THE SORT TO JUST LET HERSELF BE TAKEN. CAN'T SHE WAVE HER MAGIC WAND AND TURN THE VAMPS INTO BASSET HOUNDS OR SOMETHING?

IT DOESN'T MATTER. ***THEY*** HAVE HER. ***WE*** GO GET HER. I DON'T KNOW ***EXACTLY*** HOW NADIRA'S POWER WORKS, BUT IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S HERMIONE GRANGER.

WE ***DO*** KNOW THAT NADIRA IS ***CONNECTED*** TO MAGIC TOWN IN A SPECIAL WAY. THAT'S WHY WE THINK THEY MUST BE HOLDING HER SOMEPLACE ELSE. OTHERWISE THE MAGIC WOULD BE... UH...

THROWING A HISSY FIT.

YEAH.

WELL, DON'T WORRY. I'M ON IT, AND I'LL RING THE MOMENT I GET RESULTS.

THANKS, BRANDT. WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU.

DO YOU THINK BRANDT CAN COME THROUGH?

I HOPE. THIS IS A BOOTS-ON-THE-GROUND JOB, NOT A SLAYER OR OLD ONE SORT OF ERRAND. HE'LL GET SOME MANPOWER ON IT. HE'LL CALL.

IT'S ***NADIRA*** I'M WORRIED ABOUT.

DRUSILLA IS CAPABLE OF ***ANYTHING.***

NADIRA, DARLING, WE HAVE MUCH IN COMMON. DID YOU KNOW?

WE BOTH HAVE VOICES IN OUR HEADS. SOME ARE WISE, AND OTHERS ARE FOOLISH. IT'S UP TO *US* TO KEEP THEM IN LINE.

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. THE MAGIC COMMUNICATES TO ME IN FEELINGS. I SENSE THINGS ABOUT IT. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN.

AND I DON'T *KEEP IT IN LINE,* AS YOU SAY.

IT'S MORE THAT WE HAVE...A RELATIONSHIP. I DON'T *CONTROL* THE MAGIC.

OH, DARLING CHILD. YOU OBVIOUSLY HAVE A VERY NARROW UNDERSTANDING OF RELATIONSHIPS.

STILL SMARTING FROM THAT SMASH IN THE NOSE, BOYO?

DON'T *PUSH* ME, ANGUS.

BOYS, PLEASE. NOT IN FRONT OF OUR GUEST.

NADIRA, IT'S MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO...

...ARCHAEUS THE MAGNIFICENT!

AT LAST. NADIRA.

I'VE SO LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING YOU.

YOU KNOW WHY I'VE BROUGHT YOU HERE, DON'T YOU, LITTLE ONE?

MAGIC TOWN.

YES. AND *YOU* ARE THE *KEY* TO MAGIC TOWN.

NADIRA SAYS SHE HAS A *RELATIONSHIP* WITH THE MAGIC.

IT'S HER *BOYFRIEND* AND SINGS SONGS OF BELLS AND HUMMINGBIRDS RIGHT INTO HER BRAIN.

THAT'S NOT QUITE WHAT--

I AM GATHERING MY FAMILY AROUND ME, AND A FAMILY NEEDS A *HOME*. SOMEWHERE WE CAN BE SAFE WHILE WE GROW IN STRENGTH. A PLACE *WORTHY* OF US.

MAGIC TOWN. AND WE NEED YOU, NADIRA, TO...HOW SHALL I PUT IT? TO MAKE INTRODUCTIONS.

AND W-WHY SHOULD I D-DO THAT?

IF YOU TRULY *CARE* ABOUT THE MAGIC, THEN YOU'LL WANT TO TELL IT...

...THAT ARCHAEUS COMES BEARING A *GIFT*.

I'M A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED YOU'RE NOT BEING MORE *COOPERATIVE.*

I'D TELL YOU IF I KNEW ANYTHING, ANGEL. I *SWEAR.*

YOU SHOULD TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GET ON MY GOOD SIDE. I'M STILL UPSET WITH YOU FOR SELLING ME OUT TO THAT CRUMMY PIXIE.

AND I'VE BEEN KNOWN TO BREAK THINGS INDISCRIMINATELY.

HONESTLY, NO NEW CUSTOMERS. NOBODY ASKING FOR ANYTHING TOO EXOTIC. IT'S BEEN A SLOW WEEK.

THAT'S IT. I'VE BEEN ALL OVER MAGIC TOWN, RATTLING THE USUAL CAGES WITH NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT.

THE TERM IS *CRAPPING OUT,* YES?

ANGEL!

WE'VE BEEN ALL OVER MAGIC TOWN JUST LIKE YOU ASKED, BUT NOBODY'S SEEN OR HEARD *ANYTHING* ABOUT NADIRA.

DAMN. IF BRANDT DOESN'T COME UP WITH SOMETHING, IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT.

BREEP BREEP BREEP BREEP

HOLD ON.

GO.

BRANDT CAME THROUGH. I'VE GOT AN ADDRESS.

KOH AND I WILL BE THERE AS FAST AS WE CAN.

I KNOW THAT THE MAGIC YEARNS FOR MORE FROM ITS EXISTENCE. I DON'T KNOW IT AS WELL AS YOU DO, BUT BEINGS OF *POWER* HAVE A CERTAIN SENSE OF ONE ANOTHER.

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE MAGIC. *WHATEVER* YOUR POWER.

WELL. THAT'S WHY WE HAVE *YOU* THEN, ISN'T IT? YOU CAN BE OUR AMBASSADOR. YOU CAN MAKE THE MAGIC UNDERSTAND.

UNDERSTAND WHAT?

THAT WE WISH IT NO HARM.

THAT WE ONLY DESIRE TO WELCOME IT INTO OUR *FAMILY.* AND *TOGETHER* WE CAN ALL BE STRONGER.

I DIDN'T LET DRUSILLA BRING ME HERE TO BE YOUR *AMBASSADOR.*

I SEE. PRAY ENLIGHTEN US. WHY DID YOU *LET* HER BRING YOU HERE?

I CAME HERE TO *SAVE* YOU.

OVER HERE!

BRANDT HAD TWENTY COPS QUESTIONING EVERY BUTCHER AND MEATPACKING COMPANY IN THE CITY. A LOT OF THE BIG ORDERS ENDED UP HERE.

PIG BLOOD? I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

O'REILLY BUTCHERS

IF DRU IS RECRUITING AN ARMY FOR ARCHAEUS, THEN SHE'S GOT TO *FEED* THEM SOMEHOW.

AND TOO MUCH HUNTING IN ONE AREA WOULD DRAW ATTENTION. PIG BLOOD IS THE NEXT BEST THING.

UNDERGROUND ACCESS HERE. WE'VE GOT TUNNELS.

THEN WHY WAIT? WE'VE DISCOVERED THEIR LAIR.

BECAUSE I STILL WANT TO DO THIS THE *SMART* WAY.

SOPHRONIA? I'M WONDERING IF I CAN GET YOU TO MAKE A DELIVERY.

HOW DELIGHTFUL. PLEASE EXPLAIN HOW YOU'RE HERE TO *SAVE* ME.

NOT TO SAVE JUST YOU. TO SAVE ALL OF US.

THE MAGIC IN MAGIC TOWN IS MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. IT'S ***AWARE*** OF ITSELF AND BECOMING MORE SO EVERY DAY. AND THE MORE AWARE IT GETS, THE MORE IT REALIZES IT'S NOT LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

BUT THE MAGIC IS YOUNG, IMMATURE. IT LASHES OUT LIKE A ***CHILD*** WHEN IT'S AFRAID. I KNOW THE MAGIC BETTER THAN ANYONE. IT WILL REACT. BADLY.

I'VE UNDERESTIMATED YOU, NADIRA. YOU HAVE A RARE ABILITY TO SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE.

BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. I WILL HAVE MAGIC TOWN. AND YOU WILL HELP US SUBDUE THE MAGIC THERE.

IF YOU COME STOMPING INTO MAGIC TOWN, IT ***WILL*** BE AFRAID AND IT ***WILL*** LASH OUT. YOU'LL BE LIGHTING THE FUSE ON THE BIGGEST BOMB IN THE WORLD.

SO, NO, I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT SAVING ***YOU.*** BUT IF THAT'S PART OF THE BARGAIN TO SAVE THE PEOPLE THERE, THEN FINE. GO SOMEWHERE ELSE AND LEAVE MAGIC TOWN ALONE.

I TRIED. I REALLY DID. TO DO THIS THE EASY WAY.

I WOKE UP ONE DAY, AND I WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT, A PART OF MAGIC TOWN. EVEN NOW I'M NOT SURE WHAT I AM, BUT I DO KNOW ***ONE*** THING. WHATEVER ELSE I MAY BE...

...I NEVER ***STOPPED*** BEING A SLAYER.

GAH

WHAP

SMAK

OH!

PAFT

KRAK

OI!

PAFT

PAFT

YOU ARE BRAVE.

NNGN

AND A FOOL.

GASP

SLAMM

WE'VE LINGERED HERE TOO LONG. GATHER EVERYONE AND HEAD FOR THE NEW LOCATION.

AND BRING *HER* TOO.

YES, LORD ARCHAEUS.

SOPHRONIA, LAVINIA, THANKS FOR GETTING HERE FAST WITH THE EQUIPMENT.

STAY HERE AND GUARD THE ENTRANCE TO THE ALLEY. WHO KNOWS? WE MIGHT CHASE A FEW THIS WAY.

STAY HERE? WELL, ALL DECKED OUT FOR NOTHING.

JUST *RUDE*, REALLY.

I'VE BEEN KEEPING WATCH. QUIET SO FAR.

NO MORE WAITING. LET'S GO.

I DON'T KNOW, GUYS. NOT SURE ANYONE'S HOME.

NADIRA IS DOWN HERE *SOMEWHERE.* KEEP MOVING.

SLOW UP. I'M NOT LIKING THE SMELL IN HERE. MAYBE--

OH NO.

NADIRA.

IS ONE OF THEM--

NO. SHE'S NOT THERE.

IF THEY'D KILLED HER, THE SCENT OF SLAYER BLOOD WOULD BE *STRONG.* WHICH MEANS THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE SHE'S STILL *ALIVE* SOMEWHERE.

UH... ANGEL?

LISTEN TO ME.

WE FOUND *THIS* PLACE. WE'LL FIND THE *NEXT* PLACE. WE GO AFTER THEM, AND WE DON'T LET UP UNTIL IT'S OVER.

OKAY WITH YOU... PARTNER?

FIVE BY FIVE.

YOU DISAPPOINT ME, CHILD.

WHAT? WHY?

I TOLD NADIRA WE'D COME BEARING GIFTS. BUT YOU HAVEN'T DONE WHAT YOU *PROMISED* YET, HAVE YOU? WHAT OF THE STATUE?

OH, I...I'M TRYING. THE GIRL AT THE SCHOOL AND THEN...AWFUL FAITH INTERRUPTING MY SCHEME.

IT ALL GOT MUDDLED. AFTER I'D PLANNED IT AND EVERYTHING.

YOU WANT TO REMAIN MY *FAVORITE*, DON'T YOU?

OH, *YES*, MY LORD. OF COURSE. DON'T WORRY. YOUR DRUSILLA WILL HANDLE EVERYTHING. YOU'LL SEE.

"AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT WICKED CHILD NADIRA.

"EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T HELP GET THE MAGIC ON OUR SIDE...

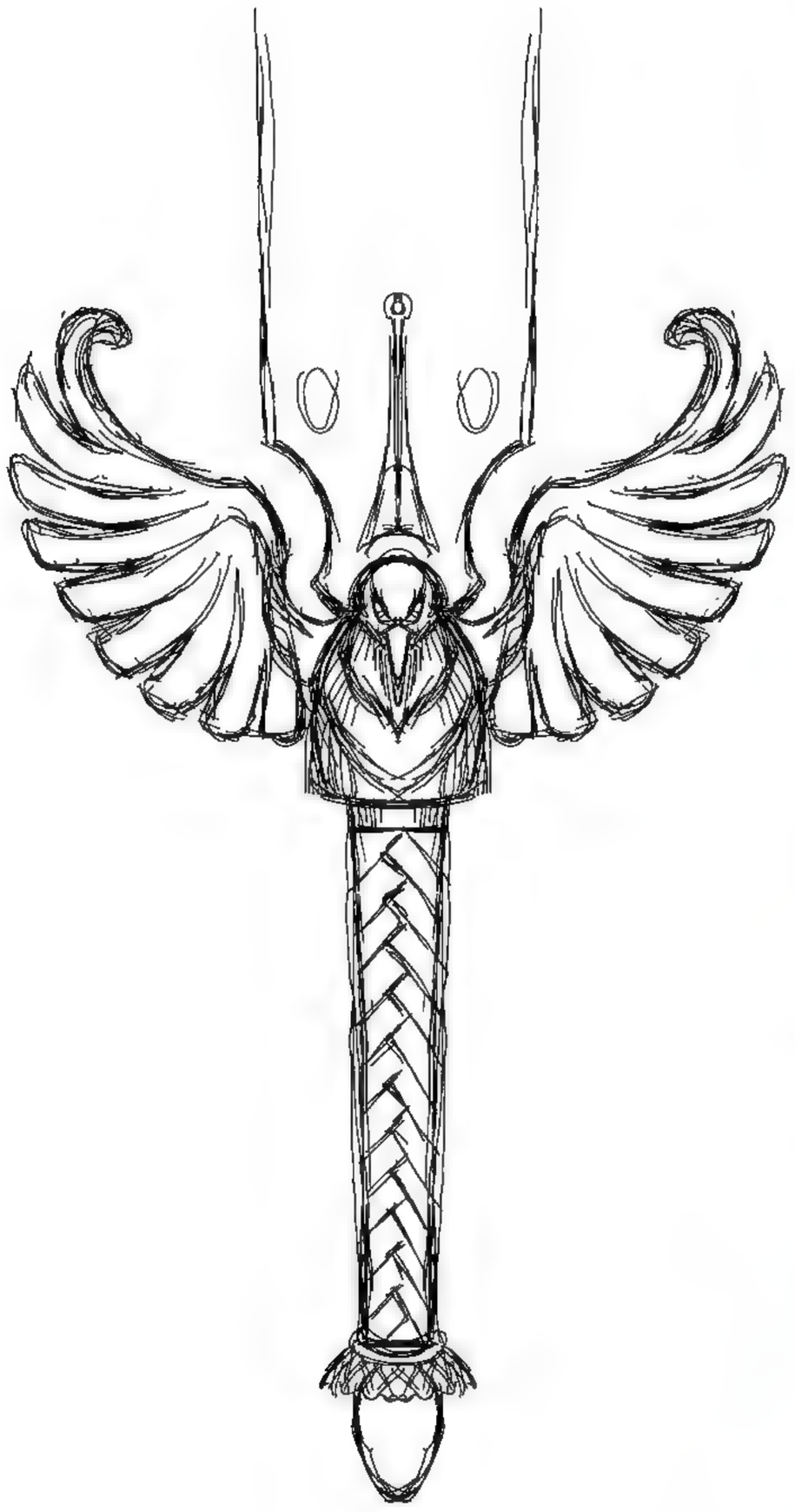
"...SHE'LL WORK PERFECTLY AS *BAIT*."

It begins...

ANGEL & FAITH™

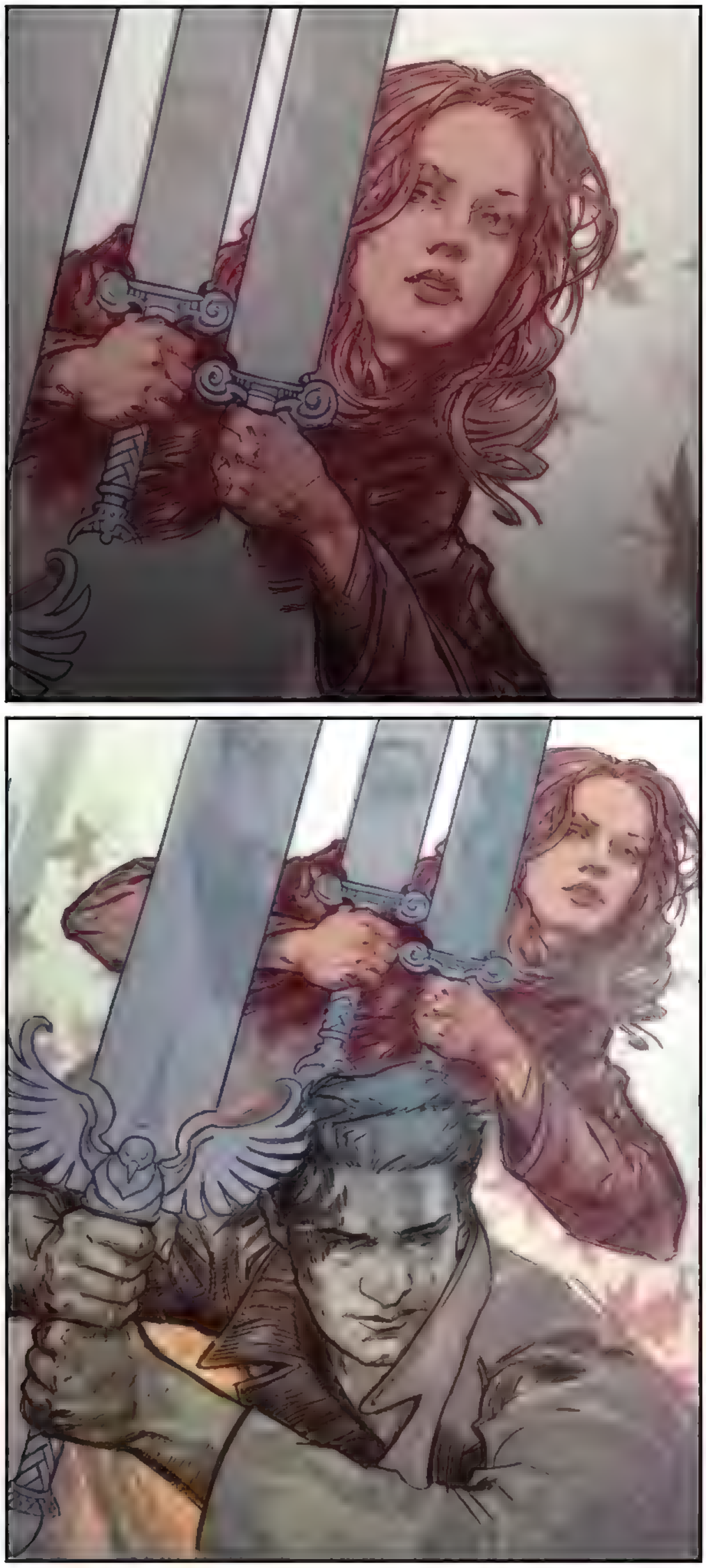
SKETCHBOOK and COVER GALLERY

WITH NOTES FROM SCOTT FISCHER

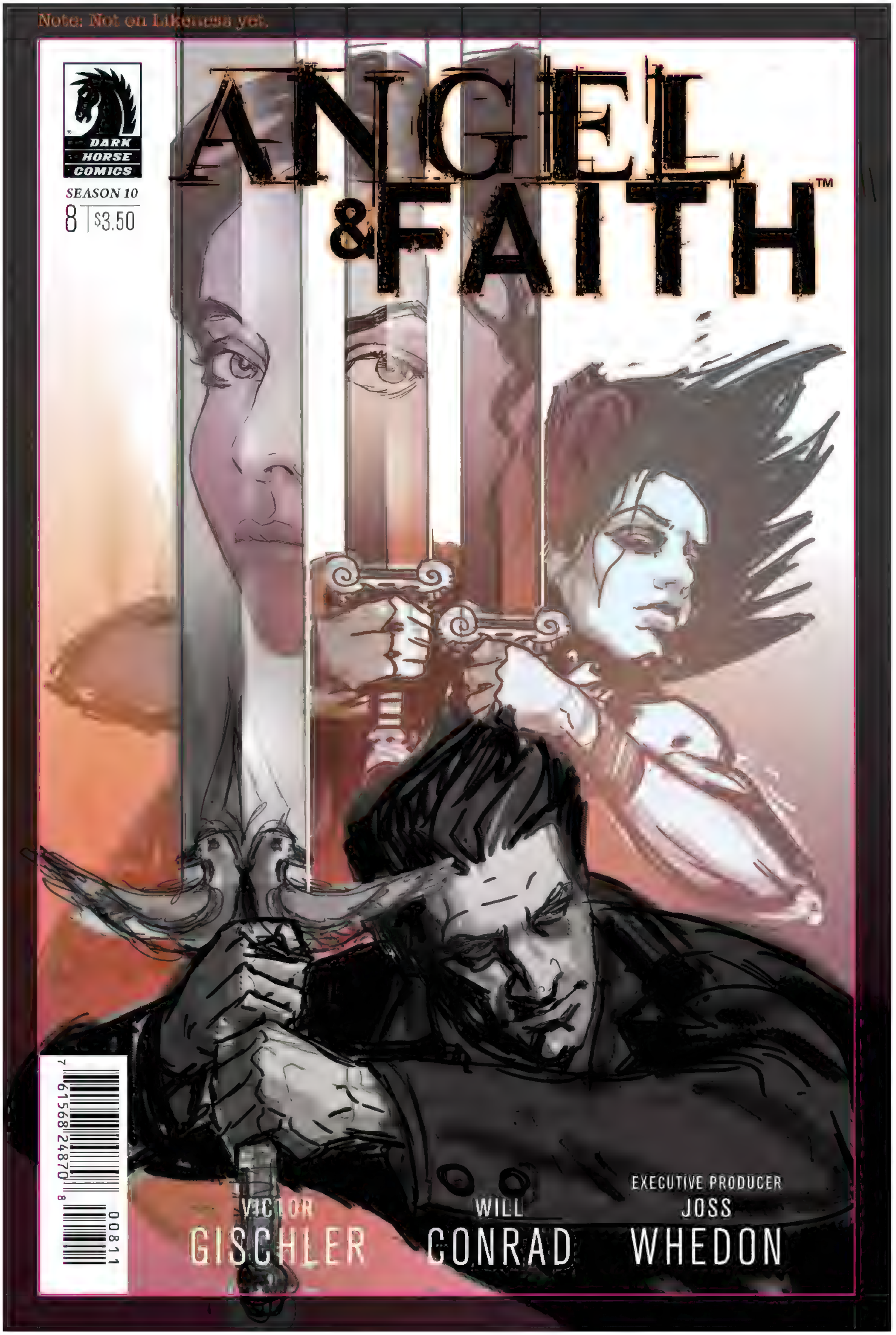


SF: Right from the rough thumbnail on this cover to issue #19 (*opposite*), I knew it would be one of my favorite of my run on Season 10. The setup was there in the rough, with the curving figures contrasting the razor-straight swords. The key was to stay present in the process—which sounds weird—but sometimes as artists we go into autopilot. It can become like paint by numbers. But I wanted to be present for every line and stroke on this. I was.

Media: 13 x 19 inches, Prismacolor pencils, Acryla gouache, FW Acrylic Artists Ink, and oil on Dura-Lar.



Note: Not on Likeness yet.



Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #16, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen.

Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #17, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen.

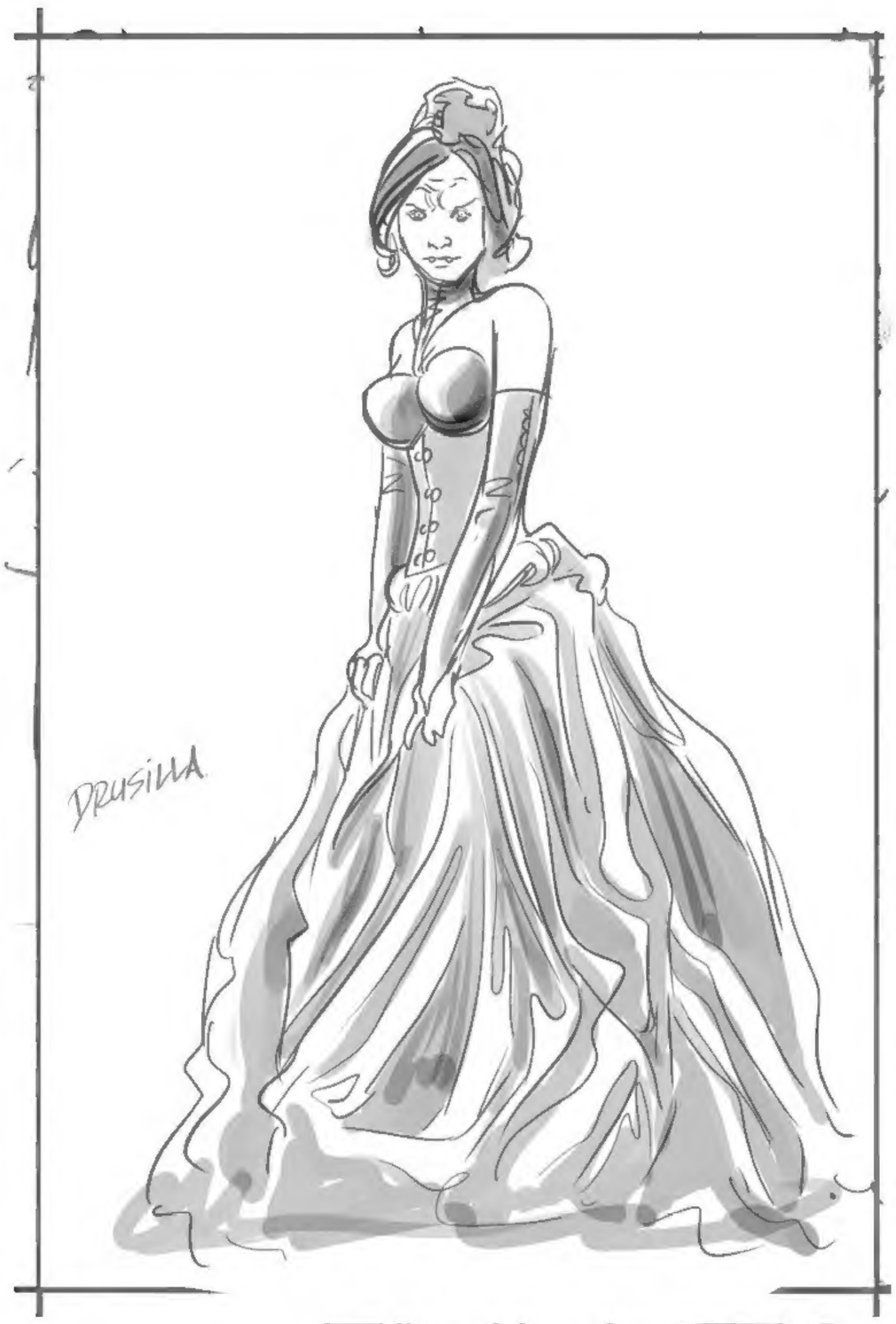
Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #18, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen.

SF: Ah, Drusilla. How I adored drawing you. I was fascinated by your movements, frame by frame, on DVD. There is a quirky beauty that you exude, and I tried my best to capture it, down to that weird thing you do with your hands.

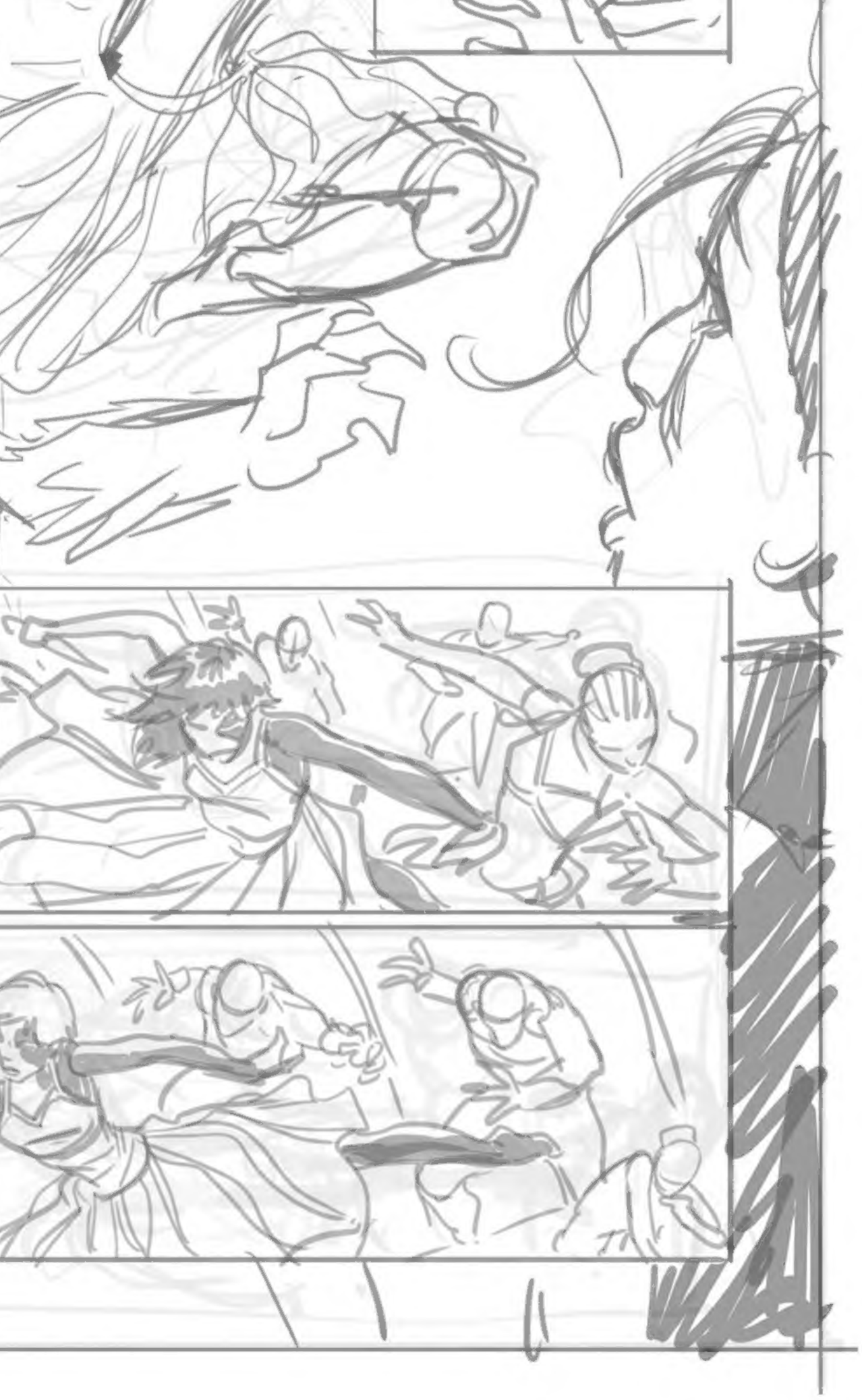
The idea for this one came to me quickly. I knew I wanted Dru to be in color, and her worshiping disciples largely monochromatic. She would be rendered; they would be line art. Because even though she's dead, she's the most alive thing about this piece!

Media: Digital.

Variant cover art for *Angel & Faith* Season 10 #18, by Mike Norton with Michelle Madsen.



A rough sketch of Drusilla by series artist Will Conrad; issues #19 and #20 were his first opportunity to draw the vampire villain. Also in issue #20, as seen in these layouts for page 16 from Will, Nadira showed her Slayer background for the first time since the end of Season 9.



SF: Think a great figure drawing happens as soon as an artist touches pencil to paper? Not always. I am trying to draw more from my head these days and back it up with photo reference when needed. On the left you can see me ghosting Angel on a lower Photoshop layer and redrawing him in a darker color. But this is probably the ninth time I've done this action on this one figure—all before touching a real pencil. The hard work is done at this stage. Then I get to have a blast when I draw it for real, on a solid foundation.

Media: 14 x 20 inches, Prismacolor pencils, Acryla gouache, FW Acrylic Artists Ink, and oil on Dura-Lar.

"A CROSSOVER STORY THAT HAS MANAGED TO BE SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE."

–GEEKED OUT NATION

ANGEL *and* FAITH

SEASON 10

VOLUME 4: A LITTLE MORE THAN KIN

Angel is troubled by a spate of nightmares but has to leave the investigation to Faith and Fred. Discovering that Angel's dreams aren't victimless, they follow the trail to a slew of missing students from a local prep school. Getting to the heart of the mystery, Faith and Fred attain gainful employment at St. Cuthbert's Preparatory School, where the mysterious deaths are linked to a growing teenage-vampire population. Meanwhile, after joining Buffy and her gang to battle a fearsome and powerful new enemy in the States, Angel returns to London in the midst of the vampire threat. But he hasn't returned alone, and he, Faith, and Fred suddenly have double the trouble—the fight is on in Magic Town!

Creative team Victor Gischler (*Spike: A Dark Place*), Will Conrad (*Serenity*), and Cliff Richards (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) bring Fred fully into the Angel and Faith fold!

"Faith comes to the front, but she'd rather be in the back of the class during this caper. This is an excellent jumping in point for new readers and an enjoyable read for fervent fans, of which I consider myself a member."

–SCIFIPULSE

"The new vampires in action is something exciting to see more of in this series."

–GEEKED OUT NATION

DARK HORSE BOOKS